

New York Saturday Journal

A HOME WEEKLY

FOR WINTER NIGHTS
AND
SUMMER DAYS.

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PACIFIC PETE, The Prince of the Revolver.

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Author of "Old Bull's-Eye, the Lightning Shot of the Plains," "Yellowstone Jack," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE STAGE-DRIVER'S NEWS.

"It's a scandalous fact!" Making this assertion with an impressive solemnity, Ginger Dick replaced the tumbler of greenish glass upon the well-polished white-pine bar, passed a red, puffy hand across his bristling mustache, to which still clung drops of the amber-hued "pizon," and then cast a glance of quiet satisfaction around upon the eager faces of his audience.

"You ain't stuffin' us, old man?" at length ventured the barkeeper, as Ginger Dick evidently paused for an answer or an exclamation of some sort.

"Thar—I knowed it! I said the boys wouldn't b'lieve sech a thing—nur I don't blame ye much. It does sound kinder fishy, when a feller thinks how long Dutch Frank has bin cook o' the road. But the little cuss called the turn on 'im this time."

"Oil up ag'in, Ginger, an' then let's have the de-tails."

Nowise loth, Ginger Dick helped himself liberally to the liquid poison; then, leaning at ease against the counter, he began his story with all the *gout* of a professional yarnspinner.

"We was on time, to a dot—"
"No need to tell that, Ginger," interrupted a little red-faced man, with well-ventilated clothing. "When was the 'Western Belle' anything else since you first took the ribbons?" The little man glanced longingly toward the black bottle and wiped his thick lips suggestively, but Ginger Dick simply acknowledged the compliment with a grave nod, and resumed.

"We was on time, as I said afore. Thar was only four pilgrims—one outside an' three insides—when we stopped at Gabbert's fer grub. Thar was Vinegar Sol, Keno Dan an' Jumpin' Jack. T'other was the stranger."

"You know the time-table 'lows forty-five minnits at Gabbert's, so the critters kin pick a bit. Wal, we grubbed—an' then kem the fun. The stranger pilgrim did it. The funnest galoot! You'd orter jest see him! All rigged up in stove-pipe hat, b'iled shirt an' shiny boots—you could see to shave in 'em. Smelt louder'n a polecat—little sweeter, though. He was a high-toned snoozer, you bet! But you'll all see fer yourselves, sence he 'lowed to locate in Windy Gap."

"After we'd done et our grub, the next thing in course was a call on Dutch Frank, at the bar, fer a stomach-settler. Vinegar Sol he 'vited the stranger to fine—I reckon he thunk he'd ketch a sucker. We nominated whisky, an' while Sol was givin' a sentiment, the stranger pilgrim axed fer a glass o' water. Dutch Frank opened his eyes, but filled the bill. Stranger he tuck an' made his grog half-an'-half—jest enough to spile both; too strong fer water an' too weak fer pizon."

"You fellers knowed how Dutch Frank was—mighty like gunpowder—easy to 'splode, an' when he *did* go off, somebody was mighty apt to git hurt. I looked fer a row, instanter. I saw Dutch's eye begin to snap, his ha'r to bristle, an' that big under lip to stick out—but you knowed how he was when rubbed ag'inst the grain, or anybody cast 'flections on his licker."

"Stranger didn't 'pear to notice nothin', but swallered bout hafe of his pizon. Then he tuck the glass o' water an' walked to the door, pullin' a little white-handled brush outen his pocket—somethin' like a young ha'r-brush—an' then, dog my cats, ef he didn't begin to wash an' scrub out his mouth, a-makin' the most owidacious faces—wuss'n a 'possum chawin' on a green persimmon! 'F he didn't, hope may die!"

At this stage of his story, Ginger Dick paused long enough to glance around upon the faces of his audience, and then, as if satisfied that they fully appreciated the enormity of the "strange pilgrim's" offense against the rules of common politeness, he took his "three fingers straight" before proceeding.

"You know how quiet Dutch Frank had grown, sence he'd fit his way to the front rank an' stood cook o' the walk. Everybody knowed the stuff he was made of, an' so thar wasn't no need o' his showin' his teeth whenever a human sneezed cross-eyed at him, like thar used to was. But he couldn't stan' this, nohow. 'Twas bad enough to leave a glass hafe full, but fer a critter to go an' scrub his mouth out, to git shot of the taste—'twould 'a' made 'old Gabriel quit tootin' his horn an' use fer a club—'twould so!"

"Dutch wasn't no angel—I reckon that's past 'puttin'." He lepped over the counter an' grabbed the stranger, like he would shake 'im to bits. But he didn't—no, not much. I don't rightly know what the pilgrim did, nur how he did it, but he kinder straightened up



"The stranger was squatted on a bucket, drawin' a bead on Dutch, lookin' jest as cool an' sweet as buttermilk."

—an' then Dutch Frank wan't thar no more! 'Stead, he lay under the bar, a-quiverin' all over jest like when you kneck a hog on the head with an ax."

"The stranger? Click—click! an' thar he stood, leanin' ag'inst the door-post, a-squintin' at us over a pepper-box. I ain't much of a coward—ef I do say it myself—but at jest that point I wished I was a mouse with a big knothole 't'hin easy reach—I did so!"

"Is this a single-handed match, gentlemen, or air I to play a lone hand ag'inst the crowd?"

"The pilgrim said this, his voice soundin' clear, but low an' soft as a woman's, an' we could see the white teeth under the black ha'r on his upper lip, jest like he was a-laughin' at us. But Vinegar Sol he spoke out, like he was in a hurry:

"We pass, stranger—it's you an' Dutch Frank fer the pot."

"Good enough! I don't know what the fool has ag'in' me, but you take an' set him on his pins, an' then ef he wants any change fer the little love-tap I lent him, jest tell him I'm waitin' outside."

"A love-tap—that's what he called it! A good healthy mule-kick wasn't a patchin'." Thar was a black lump on Dutch's throat big as a punkin, an' still a-swellin'!

"It tuck nigh a pint o' whisky to fetch the critter to. When he could fairly stand alone, he shuck us off. You should 'a' seen him then! It made me creep clean down to my boots, an' I got ready to dodge. Not that he acted so wild an' powerless like most men do. No, he was too mad fer that. His face, all but that black lump, was white as a dead critter's. His eyes looked like two holes, with a fire burnin' 'way back in 'em. 'Durned ef I didn't feel my skin crack an' shrivel when he looked at me!"

"He looked as though he wanted to speak, but couldn't. He opened his mouth, but we couldn't make out nothin' but a deep growl like—more like a grizzly b'ar when his Ebenezer is riz than anythin' human. We onderstood what he wanted, an' Keno Dan spoke up."

"He said he'd be outside, ef you wanted any more. Best go round by the back way, fer he may be a-layin' fer ye."

"But Dutch wouldn't hear to reason. He drawed, an' made jest one jump out-doors into the open! Then kem the voice o' the stranger, an' we made out the words:

"Halt! thar—I've got the drop on ye, an' the first step you make, afore I'm done talkin', down ye go, a dead man!"

"We couldn't wait no longer, so out we lepped to see the fun. It's hard to b'lieve—I wouldn't 'a' b'lieved it myself ef I'd bin alone,

but the boys kin swar to it. Thar was Dutch Frank, standin' like a stone, his pistol half-raised, jest as though he was under a charm, like. The stranger was squatted on a bucket, drawin' a bead on Dutch, lookin' jest as cool an' sweet as buttermilk. He nodded to us, as though to tell us to clear the track, so's to give 'em elbow-room, then spoke to Dutch:

"You pitched onto me, unprovoked, an' I reckon you kinder run ag'inst a snag. So fur we're even. Ef you want anything more, I'm the man fer your money. But I claim to be a gentleman. We have plenty of time; then let's do this job up in style. Are you 'greeable?"

"Dutch didn't look very 'greeable jest then—minded me of a bull-dog waitin' jest bin licked like thunder fer chawin' a hog—but he grunted out somethin', an' the stranger lowered his weepin. I looked fer Dutch to plug him—but he didn't. You never seed sech a change in a human critter. He was cowed—an' by a little slender feller which looked like Dutch could take an' break in two 'cross his knee."

"Good enough! you ain't sech a fool as you look, an' the stranger laughed out loud; soft an' clear, it sounded like music, 'most. 'Pick out one o' your frinds thar, an' tell him to step off the distance you prefer, an' ax him to give the word. Then you cut loose an' shoot your level best, fer I warn you that I mean business. When owidacious critters put their hands on me, the chances air that they git burnt—bad!"

"The words don't sound much now, when I speak 'em, but they out like a knife from his lips. 'An' Jumpin' Jack he said in my ear that he'd go two to one that Dutch wouldn't pass out no more p'izon in this kentry. I b'lieve Frank hed some sech idee himself, he acted so queer—jest like a man in a dream. But he axed Vinegar Sol to mark off the distance—twenty paces—an' you know what a straddle-bugs he is. The stranger grinned a little, as he took up his possish; I reckon he thought Dutch was just a little mite skeered, but you know Dutch was good for the size of a hat every twice at a hundred yards."

"Vinegar Sol gev the word, an' Dutch fired. I looked fer the pilgrim to drop; but he didn't. Thar he stood, jest like a rock, a-showin' his white teeth like he was a-laughin'. He hadn't even raised his pistol."

"Hold your place, thar, my man! he called out, clear an' sharp as a whistle. "You owe me a shot, but I want to light up, fust."

"It sounds tough, boys, I know, but hope may die ef the durned galoot didn't pull out a see-gar an' strike a match, jest as cool as mush an' milk!"

"Ah, what're you givin' us?" sneeringly demanded a rough-looking, red-haired giant. "Take us fer sardines!"

"Look here, Big Tom," sharply replied Ginger Dick. "I'm tellin' this yarn. You may 'sider yourself bully o' this burg, but you ain't got no call to crow over me. Whatever I say I kin back up in any way you durn please. I saw this little affair, an' so did three other men, any one on 'em as good or better men then you dar' be—"

At this juncture, when sharp words bade fair to culminate in still sharper arguments, according to the prevailing fashion, friends interposed to restore peace; not that they had any conscientious scruples against a little by-play between friends with bullets or steel, but they didn't care to lose the *finale* of Ginger Dick's story. A drink around healed all outward differences, and then the stage-driver resumed his narrative.

"I said the stranger lit a match, but he didn't light his see-gar jest then. Dutch Frank was jest *more'n* hot, to see how he was bein' played with, an' give a yell you could 'a' hearn ten mile as he lepped forward, a-shootin' at every jump. The stranger dropped the match, flung out his arm an' fired. Durned ef I b'lieve he could 'a' took aim, but Dutch dropped his weepin with a yell. The bullet had mashed his right hand all to pieces."

"The little feller cocked his pepper-box ag'in, but Dutch Frank had got his fill, an' turned tail, runnin' like a skeered jack-rabbit, a-yellin' at every jump."

"Halt!" yelled the stranger ag'in. 'Ef you pass the sage-bush yonder, I'll plug ye!"

"I don't reckon Dutch hearn him; anyway he couldn't hev understood what was said, fer he jest more'n humped himself. The sage-bush was over a hundred yards away, an' I'd 'a' bet long odds the little feller couldn't 'a' hit a runnin' mark that fur off. But he did. The minnit Dutch reached the line, he pulled trigger, an' throwed his meat cold—tuck him chug in the middle o' his head."

"Gentlemen," he said, turning to us, 'gentlemen, air you satisfied? Ef not, now I've got my hand in, I'll be most happy to oblige any or all o' ye—one at a time."

"We was satisfied—most anybody 'd 'a' bin the same, a'ter seein' the grit an' the way he handled his pepper-box—an' we told him so, too. He jest showed his teeth a little an' bowed, an' then, while we were lookin' after what was left of Dutch Frank, he loaded his pistol an' finished lightin' his see-gar. Then he 'vited us to fine him in a drink, which we did. 'The pizon didn't taste *quite* as good as this, but we didn't keer about 'usin' jest then."

The patrons of the "Hole in the Wall" earnestly discussed the case in all its bearings, paying due attention to the black bottle, until the little red-faced man grew still more rosy, his eyes more fishy, and his tongue as nimble

as those of his companions. Nor was the effect less noticeable upon Big Tom Noxon.

This man had a cheap-won reputation of being a veritable fire-eater, and had, in reality, been engaged in one or two street-fights since Windy Gap leaped into existence, through which he had passed creditably—as the times went. But his own tongue was his loudest herald.

"I'd like to see this wonderful critter o' your'n, Ginger Dick," he goth, with a sounding oath. "I'll bet two to one that he couldn't run 'round here 'thout gettin' picked up."

"Who'd do it?" quickly returned the stage-driver.

"You see me? I reckon I could chaw him right up—"

"I've got money that says you'd take water quicker'n Dutch Frank did. Put up or shut up!" and Ginger Dick produced a heavy buckskin bag of gold-dust.

"But whar's your man—show me your man fust."

"I kin do that easy. I don't reckon he'll be hard to find. Kiver the dust, or own up that you crawfish!"

"Crawfish, nothin'!" and Noxon drew out a handful of gold-pieces, which the barkeeper quickly received, after weighing out an equal amount of the dust.

"I don't mind tellin' you now, Big Tom, that the strange pilgrim is in this 'ere burg, where he 'lows to locate. Anyhow, that's what he told me. You mind—you're to pick a fuss with him, chaw him up or make him take water—or the stakes are mine. No foolin'—Talk o' the devil! Thar comes the very cuss now!" added Ginger Dick, in a whisper.

The next moment a light footstep was heard, and then the "strange pilgrim" entered the Hole in the Wall.

CHAPTER II.

BEAUTY IN DISTRESS.

"My last match—and a mighty poor excuse for one, too. If it goes out—bah! The same old luck! Well, it's good-by smoke until the old man comes, I suppose."

With these words—a mixture of discontent and philosophic coolness—the young man resumed his recumbent attitude in the grateful shadow cast by the gnarled and twisted redwood, yawning lazily.

His surroundings were not very romantic. Upon every hand rose the rocky hills, gray and forbidding, dotted here and there with a "fired" shrub, or covered with a scanty growth of shriveled grass and wild oats. Many of the rocks were fire-blackened. Wherever the pickax or long-handled shovel could make an impression, there the dirt and gravel lay in unsightly heaps, surrounding many an ugly hole and pit. It was as though an army of gigantic moles or gophers had been at work. Not very romantic, certainly; and yet Dick's Pocker had found birth in a halo of romance.

The story was a peculiar one, and a graver shade rested upon the young man's face as he glanced around and recalled the story as it had first met his ears, beside the cheering camp-fire, after a hard day's work in the gulch.

Little did he dream what a terrible interest that story was to have for him and his, in the time to come!

In the year '50, few men were more generally known throughout the gold mines than a tall, stately man who bore the singular sobriquet—"Gospel Dick." The title was honestly earned. Through the week he labored faithfully at gold-digging, and was accounted an unusually fortunate man. But when the Sabbath came, Gospel Dick substituted a Bible for a pick, and sought to interest his rough companions in the Divine Word. Though he reaped more ridicule than profit, he persisted, passing from place to place, until his name was familiar throughout the three grand gold regions of California: the Eastern Range, the Middle Placers, and the Valley Mines; and he won the respect of all, for they could but see that he was thoroughly in earnest and consistent in all his dealings.

One Sabbath afternoon he fairly electrified his rough hearers by a sermon of wonderful power and eloquence. And then he bade them farewell. He said that he had made a fortune by digging, and was about to return to his distant home, to rescue his family from want.

That was Gospel Dick's last sermon. When day dawned, he was found lifeless—well-nigh dead, bleeding from a dozen wounds; and his rich store of gold was gone.

The excitement was intense. Two men were lynched, on suspicion; but the gold was never found. Gospel Dick gradually recovered his strength, but his mind was a blank

He had only one idea; that of searching for his lost fortune.

One night he disappeared, and it was found that he had stolen a rifle, revolver and stout knife, together with the necessary ammunition. No one could afford time to search for him, and as the months passed on, Gospel Dick was almost forgotten. Then his memory was suddenly recalled.

Two prospectors came suddenly upon a strangely-impressive scene. In a basin-like valley lay two figures—that of a man and a huge cinnamon bear, locked in a grapple that even death had not separated. The fight must have been a furious and protracted one, for the ground was scarred and torn up for yards around.

A momentary gleam of pity for the unfortunate hunter—then a wild yell of joy! The bodies were lying literally upon a golden bed—nuggets of almost pure gold had been torn from their resting-places and cast into the sunlight by the furiously-trampling feet. The death-struggle had revealed a wonderfully rich deposit of gold—a veritable "pocket."

Hence came the name—Dick's Pocket—for the unfortunate was indeed the mad preacher. The tidings soon spread—but not before the two men had secured a rich fortune apiece. Miners flocked to the "rich find," but numbers soon exhausted the golden store, though not before Windy Gap was built upon the nearest available piece of ground.

Another discovery had been made. *Gospel Dick had been shot with a rifle-bullet through the back of his skull.* Experts declared that the shot must have produced instant death. Who, then, was the murderer—the bear—or—?

The enigma had never been solved.

The young man was aroused from his reverie by the sound of a light footfall, and quickly raised his head; but the words that rose to his lips were never uttered. His eyes dilated with astonishment, and an expression of ludicrous wonder overspread his bronzed face.

In an attitude of startled grace, beside a fire-scarred boulder, stood a young woman, who had evidently just observed the young man. In her hand was held a light, richly-ornamented rifle, its muzzle thrown forward, her hand upon the lock.

"An angel in Dick's Pocket!"

The ridiculous exclamation fell almost unconsciously from the miner's lips, nor did he realize how odd it sounded until a clear, mellow laugh broke from the young woman. Then, flushing deeply, he sprung to his feet, and uncovered his head.

"Excuse me, lady—I thought I was dreaming. You came so silently, and the sight of a woman—"

"I can readily believe that, sir," said the girl—for she seemed still in her teens—lowering her weapon, and smiling brightly; "I can readily believe that, from the way you started. Only—I don't feel as though I was in anybody's pocket."

"Yet you are—in Dick's Pocket," retorted the young miner, joining in her laughter; and it was remarkable upon what an easy footing that blundering exclamation had put them.

"I believe I understand you now—and I'm glad to meet with some one who knows where I am, for I've been trying to find out that enigma this two hours."

"You don't mean that you have lost your way?"

"I fear so—but my friends must be near," she quickly added, with a half-doubting glance into his face.

"I know that I am looking rather rough, just now, lady," replied the young man, his face flushing as he rightly interpreted her hesitation. "Still, I hope I am a gentleman. If I can aid you in any way, I shall be happy to do so, to the best of my ability. I am the last man in the world to thrust my services upon anybody."

"I believe you, sir," frankly replied the maiden, extending her little brown hand. "My hesitation was needless, I feel assured—and yet, in this wild country, where so many lawless characters are to be met with, it was natural enough. I do need your assistance, for I must confess that I haven't the ghost of an idea of my whereabouts."

"I am pretty well acquainted with this section, and will gladly be your guide. You came from Windy Gap?"

"Some relation to Dick's Pocket? But seriously, I never heard the name before."

"I spoke of the town, below. I supposed you were stopping there, as it is the only settlement within miles of this spot."

"No—we camped in a valley, father and I. There is a stream running through it, and just above us a good-sized waterfall. If you have ever been there, you must recollect the place. There is a large rock, with a tree growing upon it, that cuts the sheet of water in two parts. It stands right on the edge of the ledge over which the water leaps."

"I know the place—but you have wandered a good distance. The valley is five miles from here, in a direct line—twice that far by the route you must have come."

"I am a good walker, and wandered a good distance before I realized that I was lost. Then I ran a good deal—"

"In just the contrary direction, naturally—one always does," laughed the young miner. "Well, it was a fortunate mistake for me—no, don't misunderstand me," he added, hastily. "I am essentially a home body, was brought up with two sisters and innumerable girl cousins. Yet for nearly two years that I have been at the mines, I have not set eyes upon a lady. Women I have seen, but none that could remind me of home—until to-day. Can you understand this feeling? Let me make a confession. Last year I was mining near fifty miles from here. I heard some of the men talking about a fair and beautiful lady who had just arrived at Windy Gap—the wife of the hotel-keeper. I left my work and tramped clear here, for nothing else but to look upon a woman's face once more. But I didn't stay an hour. The fine lady was a painted, bold-faced, loud-talking being. I left Windy Gap that night. But now—the sight of your face has put new life into me, and I feel like a new man. It is like a glimpse of home. But—you are not offended with me for speaking so bluntly?"

"No," frankly replied the maiden, extending her hand. "It is a compliment any one might be proud of—and I'm not afraid to trust you now."

"Thanks—I shall never give you cause to regret your confidence. But—I've become a perfect bore! May I introduce myself? Mark Austin, from St. Louis."

"And I'm Edna Brand. Since all the preliminaries are settled, and you are so kind, hadn't we better be starting? I fear father will grow uneasy."

"I am at your service, Miss Edna—or should I say madam?"

"No—I am not married."

"I'm glad of that!" impulsively exclaimed Mark.

"Why so?" quickly asked Edna, her cheek flushing slightly.

"That's a leading question," replied Austin, in a grave tone, which, however, was belied by the mischievous twinkle in his hazel eyes; "and I might refuse to criminate myself. But you will not think me an impudent fellow, if—"

"I might—so we'd best keep on the safe side, and let the subject rest. You said there were two ways of reaching our camp; which one do you advise?"

Austin hesitated for a moment, which, after all, was only natural. While one trail was much the longer of the two, the other was more rugged and would offer more chances of assisting the progress of his fair acquaintance. The advantages were about evenly balanced, and so, like a true guide, he made an impartial statement of the facts.

"We will take the nearest trail, then," decided Edna.

"Very good—allow me," and Mark took possession of the light rifle. "You will find it difficult traveling in places, and may need the use of both your hands."

"Or rather," laughed Edna, with a mischievous glance, "you are afraid we may meet somebody and prefer to carry the rifle, lest they think you a captive to my bow and spear."

"There's many a true word spoken in jest, and this plaything is not your most effective weapon."

"Bosh! excuse me, but really I couldn't help it. If you could only have seen your face then, as you uttered that flowery speech. It looked as though you hadn't a friend in the world, instead of having found a new one to-day. But, a truce to this nonsense, or we'll get to quarreling, and then I fear I'd find myself minus a guide. Come, now we have a bit of fair ground before us, tell me something about yourself. Is not that the rule when friends meet?"

"Then we are to be friends—real friends?"

"I trust so—for to-day, at least."

"No longer than to-day?" and there was genuine regret in the young miner's tone.

"It may be so—I fear it will. You will not misunderstand me. I never knew but one friend, in whom I could confide my little pleasures and disappointments; and she is dead, now. I believe you would be a true, faithful friend, but it is not likely that we will ever meet again. I am here to-day—there to-morrow. I have no choice but my father's will, and he is never contented long in one place. We may resume our journey to-morrow."

"If you say that it will not be unpleasant to you, we will meet again, if not here, then wherever you may go. I have no ties to bind me to one place."

"No—please forget what I said, it was very foolish, but mine has been a strange life, and no one has ever taught me to value my real thoughts. We will part as good friends, but you must promise not to carry out your threat. Father is stern and suspicious toward all strangers—he has been deceived and wronged so often that he looks upon every unknown person as a secret enemy—and it would be very unpleasant for us all. You promise not to think of following us?"

"No—because I'd only break the pledge, and I won't even try to deceive you. You called me friend—I will prove myself worthy the name, if I live. But you mustn't ask such a promise of me. I like you—I want you to like me; but how can that come about if we are to part now, never again to meet?"

"I thought it had come about already," retorted Edna, with a little laugh, but her face was averted. "You say that you like me—I'm not ashamed to confess the same."

"But—I meant something more."

"See! the jumping-off place!" quickly interposed Edna, as they came upon an abrupt descent, almost precipice. "I'm afraid you overrated your skill as a guide."

"No—this is the only point where we can cross the canon. Allow me—" and Austin gently lowered her to a narrow ledge some six or seven feet below.

Scarcely had he released his grasp, when Edna uttered a faint cry and sprang along the ledge. At the same moment Mark heard a loud snort, followed by the peculiar sniff that is made by only one animal. Edna, in her sudden fright, had passed beyond his reach, else he might have drawn her up out of danger. Realizing this, he dropped lightly to the ledge, holding the rifle ready for use.

Squatting upon the narrow shelf of rock, scarce twenty feet distant, was a huge cinnamon bear, its wicked eyes glowing, its yellow fangs showing between the red, dripping lips.

"Run along the ledge, Edna—quick! I will keep him back."

He had no time for more, nor to see that he was obeyed. Angry at having its rest disturbed, the bear moved forward, growling fiercely and showing its teeth. A struggle, with such scant foothold could scarce be otherwise than fatal; but the young miner had no choice. He leveled his rifle and fired. But at the same instant the bear lunged up its head, and instead of piercing its eye, the bullet merely shattered its lower jaw.

Austin dropped the rifle and drew his revolver. He only had time for one snap-shot, then the bear was upon him. Snarling fiercely, maddened with the pain of its double wound, the brute made a furious stroke at the young miner, but fortunately overreached his aim. Struck with the stout forearm, instead of the terrible claws, Mark was flung against the perpendicular rock with stunning force. Yet he retained consciousness enough to cock and thrust his revolver forward until its muzzle was buried in the loose, shaggy hide. At the report, the beast gave a wild roar of pain, then its powerful arms closed upon the body of the miner in a terrible grip. With a gasping, gurgling cry, Mark flung himself heavily forward, and they fell over the ledge—down!

CHAPTER III.

"OLD BUSINESS."

"Up a stump—that's me! A critter that's follered so many false trails he's got so 'nation bad mixed up that he don't know his head from a hole in the ground—that's me, agin! Why can't a feller lay down an' go to sleep an' wake up to find things all onsnarled ready to his hand? Sugar in a rag! I wouldn't that be gee-licious, though! Fr instance; here's me, little Old Business, in a minnit."

"I struck the Eastern Range, as they call it. I axed fer my man. Nobody knowed 'im—said so, anyhow. I scraped 'quaintance' with everybody, his wife, cook an' poodle-dog. I drunk rivers o' rye, oceans o' Bourbon, chewed up hull cords o' black navy an' niggerhead; bugger-mugged with buggy injuns an' hugged that squaws; et rats an' dogs wif' China people; let big, black-mustached fellers turn my pockets outside in with their poker, monte—you can't tell which is the woman-keerd—an' all sich little 'musements; did everything but chew head-bugs an' horn-

toads with Putes. An' what'd I make by it? Echo sais in mournful 'cents—not a durned thing!"

"Then I tuck in the Middle Placers. 'Twas the same thing thar, only more so. Nobody didn't know nothin'—cept one feller. He knowed too pesky much. He give me d'rections. I follered 'em. Traipsed forty mile—clum a hill that was so high the moon used to bump agin' its top every time it tried to pass by. Found the big rock—knocked—nobody didn't come. Knocked agin—same feller came what didn't come afore. Got mad—kicked the rock over. 'Twas all a dog-goned lie. Nobody'd never lived thar. That made me red-hot! Went back—chawed the feller's ear. Then tuck a fresh start."

"Struck the Valley Mines—an' hyar I am, a thousan' miles from bed rock, nigh as I kin tell. Not the foot sign o' a clue. Reckon I'll hev to try the moon next—mebbe he's tuck a v'y'ge thar—be jest my luck—'twould so?"

In a narrow valley—almost canon—was seated the man from whose lips, as if unconsciously, fell this peculiar soliloquy. Leaning against the perpendicular rock, clasping both knees with his hands, pulling at a black, stumpy clay pipe, in short, decisive whiffs, an expression of comical disgust rested upon the old man's features, in perfect keeping with his speech.

Of his figure, little could be told, he was so doubled up. A grizzly skin cap—round as a ball—covered his head. From beneath it hung a shaggy mat of dingy gray hair, mingling with a long, heavy beard, white at the sides, but plentifully besprinkled in front with tobacco-juice. His eyes were rather small, but keen and bright as diamonds. His garb was a rude mixture of skin and woolen, dirty and greasy, patched and ragged. A short, heavy rifle leaned against his shoulder; a long knife and two revolvers were at his waist. The weapons at least had not been neglected, and were evidently well worth the care bestowed upon them.

Suddenly his attitude changed. His eyes dilated, his head was lifted and the pipe lay idly between his teeth. A faint murmur of human voices in conversation came to his ears, though he was unable to distinguish the words.

Then came other sounds; a cry of terror, followed by another of warning; several shots, fierce growls and snarling cries; and then a dark mass shot swiftly before his eyes, falling upon the moss-covered rocks with a dull, sickening thud.

"Butter in a gourd! that's a nice way to git down-stairs! Hornets up a trowsers' leg—let up thar, you overgrown galoot! Don't ye know better—won't, eh? Then hyar goes fer your meat-house—up to Green river!"

A man and bear, locked in a death-grapple, had fallen into the canon or defile, from the ledge above. Though the fall had been under thirty feet, and the bear had been under most when the bottom was reached, the shock appeared to have affected it but very slightly, if at all. Whirling over, it sought to tear the throat of its prey; but its under jaw was useless.

Springing forward, the hunter attacked the furious beast, knife in hand, and twice planted his long blade to its very hilt in the animal's side. With a frightful roar of pain, the bear turned to face his new enemy, with an activity astonishing in one so aged, bounded back to where his rifle lay, and checked the mad charge with a deftly-planted bullet. With one stifled snarl, the huge brute sunk to the ground, its strong limbs quivering in death.

Mingled with the echoes of the rifle-shot was a clear, long-drawn cry. The hunter started at an answering cry sounded from the ledge directly above him. He distinguished the words:

"I am here, father—come quickly!"

With a strange expression upon his face, the old man glided quickly out from the rock-wall, until he could command a view of the ledge above. He caught a glimpse of a slight figure standing upon the shelf—the figure of a young woman. At that instant she turned and glanced anxiously down into the defile, her features pale and agitated.

Almost simultaneously the head and shoulders of a man protruded over the upper escarpment, directly above the maiden. In an angry voice he began:

"What the deuce possessed you to run away?"

The sentence was never concluded. A sharp exclamation and sudden movement of the hunter below arrested the new-comer's attention, and their gaze met fairly. A change passed over the face of each of the men. That of the old hunter expressed doubt and indecision; the other betokened terror.

"Quick, girl—give me your hands!" gasped rather than spoke the man above, as he rudely, almost fiercely, clutched the maiden and drew her up from the ledge.

It was swiftly executed, and the couple disappeared almost ere the old hunter divined the man's purpose. A sharp cry broke from his lips and he sprang forward as if to pursue, but then he paused, with a backward glance at the motionless form of the young miner. There was an evident struggle in his mind, but humanity finally conquered.

"The trail 'll keep, an' I may be mistook, a'ter all. 'Twas only a glimpse, an' fifteen year is a long time. Yas, it'll keep, but this feller—Green persimmons in a 'possum's jaw!"

The exclamation was one of intense surprise, caused by the sight of the senseless man's face as he gently rolled him over. Evidently the parties had met before.

"Glory to—butter an' aigs! The critter ain't dead yet! Mark—Mark Austin, if ye ain't dead, speak to a feller an' tell him so. Whisky in a rubber bottle—that's the stuff, a'ter all!"

Muttering incoherently, the old man produced a flask of liquor and set about restoring the wounded miner, but with only partial success. Austin did, open his eyes, for a moment, but after a brief, vacant stare around, his head sunk back and he swooned again.

An anxious expression rested upon the old hunter's face, as he hurriedly inspected the miner's wounds. They looked serious. Though the jaws of the bear had been disabled, his long, sharp claws had not been idle. One thigh had been laid open from hip to knee; his breast and side were torn and deeply scratched.

"He'll bleed to death in a hour, ef them cuts ain't tended to. I must git him down to camp, if I bu'st fer it."

Muttering thus, the old hunter managed to raise the lifeless form upon his back, and then set off down the defile at a lively pace, betraying a wonderful degree of strength and endurance in one so aged.

But he was not permitted to progress far without interruption. He had traversed the canon and was passing along what seemed an old watercourse, now dry and baked by the rays of the fervent sun. The course was a direct one for nearly two hundred yards. An

active man might have scaled the nearly perpendicular banks, if unincumbered; but there was no cover to be found nearer.

Bending low beneath his burden, the old hunter did not notice that a tall, roughly-dressed man was standing directly before him, in the old watercourse.

"Halt there—what are you doing with that body?" he uttered in a clear, sharp tone, and a significant click-click emphasized his words.

"Butter in a gourd! Git out, 'e pesky fool—don't point that popgun this-a-way! S'pose it'd go off—"

"Ha! that's Mark Austin—murderer, I'll—"

The rifle was brought to a level, and the fate of the old man seemed sealed. But a quick wit and ready-invention stood him in good stead in this emergency.

Wheeling quickly around he squatted to the ground and bowed his head low, thus using the body of young Austin as a shield. Slightly moving one of the wounded man's arms, he peered cautiously back at the red-shirted miner, who, disconcerted by the sudden unexpected move, had partially lowered his rifle.

"'E durned fool—don't ye got no sense, at all?" cried the old hunter, sharply. "Cain't ye see this pore boy is a-bleedin' like a stuck hog? D'y' want to keep me hyar ontel he goes up the flume?"

"You killed him—"

"Stranger, that's a durned lie. Fust the boy ain't dead; next, I'd hev ye know that I, Old Business in a minnit, ain't in the man killing business, jest at present."

"That's my friend and partner—Mark Austin," replied the miner, advancing rapidly. "I love him as though he was my own son, and if you have injured him, better—"

"All right, boss," and Old Business, as he quaintly termed himself, rose erect and faced the miner without sign of uneasiness. "I reckon the boy 'd a' bin 'pletely chawed up ef it hadn't bin fer me. You kin see it's the work of a b'ar—but while we're gabbin' hyar, the pore boy is a-bleedin' to death."

"Give him to me. Do you follow this valley—two miles below here you will find a brush-shanty. That's ours. Get somethin'—"

"I know the place—an' what to git some salve as 'll heal 'em up quicker'n a cat kin wink—"

Holy Moses! drat the hole!"

Hastily picking himself up, the hunter started down the valley at a wonderful speed, while the old miner, carrying Mark as tenderly as a mother her baby, followed him as rapidly as possible, nor did he pause for rest until he met the returning messenger, bearing a couple of ragged white shirts and a large handful of triangular-shaped glistening leaves.

"Lay him down—strip off his duds—then chaw these leaves like you was old Neb—grass-eater."

Setting the example, Old Business soon had Mark's wounds plastered over with the slimy pulp, and then neatly wound the cloths around all. While thus engaged, the miner, who had already given his name as Lefe or Lafayette Pike, was busied in making a rude litter, cutting down a couple of slender poles and laying branches across. Gently lifting the still unconscious man upon the litter, they raised the burden and trudged on to the rude brush-cabin.

Pike closely questioned Old Business as to how the accident had occurred, and received a tolerably satisfactory answer, though the hunter never once mentioned the fact that Mark had been accompanied by a beautiful young woman, nor a word of the dark-faced man who had so abruptly hurried her away.

When Mark was deposited upon the rude pallet in one end of the hut, and, after calling in a faint voice for a drink of water, had sunk into a deep sleep of exhaustion, Pike for the first time took a good look at the face of the stranger. Their eyes met squarely, and the expression of each face gradually changed.

Pike seemed the most agitated; in his eyes was a look almost of fear—such as one may see in the eyes of a hunted and cornered animal.

"You look tired, fr'nd," quietly uttered Old Business. "Better set down an' take a rest."

"Who—who are you?" muttered Pike, his voice sounding strained and unnatural.

"A man—like yourself. Didn't take me fer a woman-critter, did ye? 'F ye mean what's my name, that ye're welcome to; Old Business—that's my name an' my natur'."

What do I do? A leetle o' everything. Jest how I'm huntin'—an' I reckon I've struck out big trails, this day. Good-by—I'm gone," and he abruptly left the hut.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PILGRIM CREATES A SENSATION.

A DEAD silence fell over the little knot of Windy Gapers, as the subject of their conversation entered the saloon. Their bronzed, heavily-bearded faces wore that silly, half-guilty look which speaks so much plainer than words, and the new-comer must have been blind indeed if he did not read their conscious looks aright.

Be that as it may, he appeared quite at ease. He passed beside the counter, leaning against it in an attitude of careless grace, as he glanced keenly around upon the company, a half-mile upon his mustached lip.

The first sensation of the Windy Gapers was one of surprise that a man like this had been able to cow curly Dutch Frank, who, for two years past, had been acknowledged champion of the road—either in "rough-and-tumble" or the more gentlemanly accomplishment of trigger-pulling.

As the "strange pilgrim" was destined to play no unimportant part in the history of Windy Gap, a brief description of his personal appearance may not be amiss.

But little if any above the medium height of man, at first glance he appeared a mere stripling in contrast with the brawny specimens of humanity whom he now confronted. But a close observer would have noted the clean limbs, the deep, well-rounded chest, the lithe, panther-like grace of every movement, the just proportion of every member, and would have coincided with the verdict of Ginger Dick—he was just built from the ground up!

From beneath the glossy beaver hung crisp, curling locks of a jetty hue, reaching to his shoulders. A small, neatly-trimmed mustache shaded the firm, red lips, now parted just enough to reveal a glimpse of the even, white teeth. His features were almost sternly regular, rendered even more severe by the dead-white of his skin. His eyes were large, black as a coal, but their expression was hard and defiant. This, together with the thin lines that ran down from each corner of his mouth, gave a chilling, disagreeable expression to an otherwise perfect face.

His dress would have met with approval on Broadway, but seemed strangely out of place in this wild, lawless region, where donning a clean flannel shirt was considered "putting on style," and wearing one's pants over one's boots a sure symptom of big-headism. A suit of black broadcloth, a white Marseilles vest, a daintily-embroidered shirt with sparkling dia-

mond studs, lavender kids upon a hand that would not have disgraced a woman; these, with thin, patent-leather boots upon a small, high-arched foot, completed the "pilgrim's" toilet.

As Big Tom Noxon took in these details at a glance, he uttered a short snuff of disgust and drew his gigantic frame erect, casting a glance upon Ginger Dick which said, plainly as though expressed in words:

"This is the baby you pit against me!"

But Ginger Dick appeared in nowise disconcerted, though he had made a wager that few stage-drivers could afford to lose. Instead of quailing beneath the scornful glance, he advanced and greeted the stranger with a rude, native grace, and said:

"Evenin', stranger. I war jest tellin' the boys hyar 'bout you an' Dutch Frank. Gentlemen," he added, turning so as to face his comrades, "this is my fr'nd."

"Thanks," said the stranger, bowing as he grasped the proffered hand. "Friends are not so plenty in this world that one more need be unwelcome—and you look like a man to be counted on. But come—I'm dry. Gentlemen, will you honor me with your company?"

As a speaker, the strange pilgrim was voted a success—particularly in his peroration. As one man the company ranged themselves along the bar, where their glasses were filled in a twinkling, Big Tom with the rest.

His bronze face flushed a shade deeper as he caught the keen, gray eyes of Ginger Dick fixed upon him with a quizzical expression, and the glass of liquor was replaced upon the bar with a sharp thud that called all eyes toward him. Contracting his shaggy brows, Noxon returned the glance of the stranger with a dogged stare.

"You don't drink, my friend."

"No, I don't drink. I reckon my mouth's my own."

"I don't wish to claim it, I'm sure," and at the light laugh, Big Tom's face flushed deeply and his blue eyes began to glow. "But, excuse me—perhaps you are indisposed?"

"F you mean by that 'at I'm sick, I ain't, not by a durned sight. I ain't that kind of a critter. I'm well enough, 'a'ays, to jest natchally chaw up any man who 'tempts to put on style over me, you hear me?"

"We wasn't talking of putting on style, nor yet of 'chawin' up.' I simply asked if you were indisposed," quietly replied the stranger, daintily sipping his liquor.

"An' I told you no, I wasn't," added Big Tom, doggedly.

"Good enough! But I'm not deaf. No one is going to force your inclinations—only—Gentlemen, I don't know what the rules and regulations of polite society may be in this burg, but where I hail from, a man is expected to drink when invited—or else give his reasons."

"That's fair diggers law the world over!" cried Ginger Dick. "If you don't like the whisky, I'll drink it for ye," confidentially whispered the little red-faced man, sidling up to Big Tom.

"You pukeachee, or I'll lend ye one as 'll put a stop to your swillin' till kingdom come!" cried Noxon, so threateningly that the little man retreated until he stumbled over a rude stool and measured his brief length upon the floor.

"You heard me, friend?" politely insisted the stranger.

"Yes, I hear ye—what of it?" growled Big Tom, sharply.

"I invited you to join us—you decline. Is it because the company is distasteful to you?"

"Comp'n'y's all right—cept one."

"And that one is—"

"A fool! I order guess that, by this time, 'thout axin' no more questions. But, since you won't see the point, I'll spit it out, plain English. I don't like your looks, nor I won't drink with ye, nuther—so thar!" and Big Tom drew himself up defiantly, one hand resting upon his hip, in close proximity to the heavy "navy."

Long experience had taught the Windy Gapers what to expect after such a blunt speech as this, and as one man they drew aside, leaving the two men confronting each other,

you were hinting at me. I don't know how I would act under such circumstances, since no man has ever spit into my face, much less attempted to rub it in. Very likely it would make me mad, though I claim to be a peaceable man. But let that pass. Instead, let me tell you a little story—"

"Oh, cuss the story—an' you 'long of it, too?" grunted Big Tom, turning away in disgust. "Ginger Dick, I reckon I'll trouble you for that—"

"One moment, please—I really beg that you will listen to my story. It is a case in point, and I think you will be satisfied with me when you hear it."

Big Tom glanced over his shoulder, a disagreeable sneer upon his thick lips.

"You see it happened like this," continued the imperturbable stranger, still leaning carelessly against the pine counter. "In '30 I was in Hangtown, and chancing to enter a saloon of course invited the gentlemen up to drink. They all joined me, except one—a big, overgrown lummock with red hair all over his face—a face that would have disgraced a hangman. Excuse me, gentlemen, but you laugh too soon. You'll see the point in a moment."

"Oh, cheese it!" growled Big Tom, with an angry glare, for he half-believed the pilgrim was ridiculing him.

"He refused. I poured out a glass of whisky and pushed it toward him—just as I do to you, friend, and said: 'Don't you think you'd better drink with me, my good man?'"

The point was perfectly visible to all, now. Even Big Tom saw it. Without changing his careless attitude in the least, the stranger now held a gleaming revolver leveled full at Noxon's head.

"What's the crawfish now?" muttered Ginger Dick, in an ecstasy of delight, as the Windy Gapers quickly drew to one side all save Big Tom. He stood in his tracks like one suddenly petrified, staring blankly down the black muzzle of the deadly weapon.

"Easy, there, friend," and the change in the stranger's voice was actually startling; instead of the soft, almost drawing speech, it was now sharp and metallic. "I'm a nervous man, and if you force me to change my aim, I'm really afraid that this pistol might explode. I should hate to hurt you—I would, really, for I'm quite a woman in my dread of blood—it makes such a disagreeable mess. And yet—you will pardon me, I'm quite sure—I really have a curiosity to see you drink. Oblige me, barkeeper, by passing that glass to him? Thanks; come, friend, this weapon is heavy, and I'm getting nervous. Please drink that liquor!"

"See you hung first, an' then I won't!" snarled Big Tom; but the drops of perspiration were trickling down his shaggy beard, and his eyes visibly quailed.

"Bah! don't be a fool, man," and the voice sounded sharper and harder than ever. "Better a glass of whisky in your stomach than a blue-pill in your brain. Must I insist? Very well. I'll count ten, and if you haven't drank afore I finish, as sure as you're a living man now, I'll send you to join your dear pard, Dutch Frank!"

In a clear, distinct tone the stranger began to count. Despite his brute courage, Noxon could not withstand that cold, pitiless glance, and almost despite himself he raised the glass to his lips. But the first mouthful choked him. With a muffled snarl of rage, he plunged forward, striking out furious with his sledgehammer fists.

But the pilgrim was "up to snuff." Leaping aside he thrust out one foot and tripped the mimer, at the same instant delivering a lightning-like blow with his left hand, directly upon Noxon's bull neck, felling him like a shot.

"Hurrah for hurrah! the banty ag'in' the shanghai ferever!" squealed Ginger Dick, dancing around in an ecstasy of delight. "Stranger, your paw! You're jest the biggest little man I ever see—take somethin'!"

"No—thanks, all the same. I suppose yonder brute will not be satisfied until he has had a shot at me—"

"F he says a word we'll ride 'im on a rail!"

"No—let him run his tethers now. He won't be satisfied without another lesson, and I like to have my business matters wound up before bedtime. Just soak his head in a bucket of water, and when he comes to, tell him that he can find me in the open, below the town. He'll be just mad enough to shoot careless, and I'm afraid he might hurt some one in here."

With these words, the stranger sauntered leisurely down the one crooked street of Windy Gap, by the way, at this moment seemed a misnomer, for no more than a pleasant breeze was astir, just sufficient to counteract the heated rock ridges that formed a rugged wall upon the north and south sides of the rude town.

Windy Gap, like hundreds of its prototypes, had grown in a single night, as it were, caused by an unusually rich "find"—of which more anon. The location was not a particularly desirable one. Upon every side rose the rugged, rock-crowned foothills—for miles around there was nothing but a succession of hills and hollows, frowning cliffs and yawning canons. Windy Gap was the only spot for miles that offered sufficient unincumbered space for a town. A narrow valley—not two hundred yards in width at any point—lying between two rocky ridges that stretched from miles to the east and west. Along this valley came the "ocean breeze," as well as the "mountain zephyrs," with a force that at times rendered pedestrianism almost an impossibility, that had brought more than one hastily-erected slab shanty to grief, and rendered real estate very unsteady—a man had only to walk from one end of the town to the other, in order to become possessed of at least two lots—one in each eye.

But the strange pilgrim was evidently not troubled by any such thoughts. He passed along like one entirely satisfied with himself and the world in general, until he had cleared the town; then he sat down upon a black boulder and lighted a cigar. A sudden yell from the distance caused a cold smile to flit athwart his face, and he took a quick glance at his revolver—the same weapon that had sent Dutch Frank to his last account.

"The fool is coming. I think that this lesson will answer my purpose," softly breathed the stranger, as a bareheaded figure, closely followed by near two-score rough-clad worthies, came dashing through the town.

"Look out, stranger—he's goin' far ye!" yelled Ginger Dick, in friendly warning—possibly remembering his golden interest in the little affair.

"You don't trick me this time, cuss ye!" snarled Big Tom, as he paused not twenty paces distant and leveled his revolver.

Standing erect, still smoking, a revolver hanging carelessly at his side, the stranger merely said:

"Don't waste your lead, friend, or you're my meat!"

Choking with rage, Big Tom fired. The

stranger started slightly, but then bounded forward, swift as an arrow fresh from the bow, his revolver speaking at the same instant.

A yell of pain broke from Noxon's lips, as his arm fell helpless, his revolver exploding as it touched the ground. And the next moment the stranger stood almost within arm's length of him, his pistol at a level.

"Down upon your knees—down, I say! Down upon your knees and beg my pardon, or, by the living Eternal! I'll scatter your thick brains to the winds!"

For a moment Big Tom hesitated, but he saw that the pilgrim meant business—the steely glitter in the big eyes showed that—and then he sank to the ground.

"You're too hefty for me, boss—I beg!" he muttered.

"Good enough! We'll be better friends after this. Now get up and have your arm looked to. Go to the hotel and tell them that you're my friend—that PACIFIC PETE stands the damage."

(To be continued.)

"OCTOBER."

BY FRANK M. IMBRIE.

One morn I heard a murmur at my window;
A pulsing stir, like softly-stolen kiss;
And then a rustle, as of flight of seraphs
Earth-pinioned, by some earth-entrancing bliss;
A subtle fragrance steeped my drowsy senses,
Rare odors from a hundred torrid flowers:
A flush, rufescent, flooded all my chamber
Like tints born in Italy's fruit-lug bowers;
'Twas bright October to her twin September,
Pledging her vows in promised votive showers.

Then silence stole. Methought I'd softly follow
This new-crowned goddess in her festive wake;
But air-born spirit, she, I saw but vapor:
Yet felt some spell, I dared not, could not break;
Slowly the dawn's mist-veil upward lifted
From banners woods—so late in tender green—
And now, a brilliant phalaex cleaves the ether
In scarlet crest, and lustrous yellow sheen:
Like gayly-vestured veterans ranged for battle,
When through the mist of smoke the ranks are seen.

She enters swift a vine-empowering arbor.
Where emerald, waxen clusters flush with pride;
The fading leaves, with smile so wan, yet tender,
Whisper: "Bright autumn comes to claim his bride!"

She dips her finger in a cloud-hung caldron
Giving forth a gleam of radiant glow;
Anon, a frosty touch, that warms the crimson
Into a riotous, brain-bewildering flow;
And listening thus, in amethystine blushes
They hear the Bacchant's bugles wildly blow:

"Come to the feast, the votive cup is brimming!
Come to the banquet, rich with nectar'd wine!
Come where the purple clusters spill ambrosia,
Come where Libation ope her crystal shrine!
Come when the faintly-tinged, lutescent splendor
Of sunset lends her crest of palest gold;
When, swift athwart the sky's cerulean brightness
Flamboyant dyes in gorgeous flashes roll;
When, like old, filmy gauze, of orient texture,
Twilight's soft shades fall gently fold on fold.

"Come when the midnight flushes far the zenith,
When frosty stars gleam through the clean
Attendant fair Luna with her thousand tapers
Up to her throne; our banquet's peerless queen!
Come when the gods and goddesses hold revel,
High carnival in draughts of perfumed wine;
Come, crown October, sovereign of the seasons,
Queen-moon of all the year's enchanted time!
Fill high the bowl in her own ruby vintage,
While burdens wreaths the cup entwined!"

The Prairie Rover:

OR,
THE ROBIN HOOD OF THE BORDER.

BY BUFFALO BILL,

AUTHOR OF "DEADLY-EYE, THE UNKNOWN SCOUT," ETC.

CHAPTER XII.

SAD TIDINGS.

AFTER having successfully, and unhurt, run the gantlet of his foes, the Prairie Rover continued on for several hours ere he drew rein to give Comrade a rest, which he really needed after his severe ride.

But the mustang was a wiry animal of remarkable endurance, and a few hours served to refresh him greatly, and with renewed vigor he continued on at an easy gait through the long hours of the night, when the scout again made a long halt for food and rest, in a small motte where the grass grew luxuriantly, and where there was a spring of clear, cold water.

Having looked to the wants of Comrade, rubbed him down thoroughly and staked him out to feed upon the juicy grass, the scout broiled some jerked buffalo meat upon the coals, and spreading his blanket laid down to rest, and hours passed ere he awoke.

Once more he mounted, and again Comrade's powers were put to the test, and with such good result, that the walls of the fort came in sight ere sunset, and just at twilight he dashed into the stockade citadel, and was welcomed by a loud cheer from the soldiers.

But at a glance Prairie Rover discovered that some important event had transpired, for all was excitement and confusion, and he feared that perhaps Colonel Vernon had lost his life in battle with the Indians, for whether Wild Wolf had reached the band ere they had attacked the upper settlements, he was not aware.

But his fears upon that score quickly vanished, when an orderly came to conduct him to Colonel Vernon.

The commandant sat in his private room, his face pale and terribly stern; but rising as the scout entered, he said:

"Well, what of your expedition?"

"It was a raid of death, sir, for we destroyed every Indian village in the hills, and more than double our own number of warriors were slain, and with only the loss of twenty-five men, seventeen of whom are soldiers."

"A good report; you have done nobly; but where is Raymond?"

"Besieged in the ruined outpost, colonel, for we were followed closely by the Indians, and with our horses broken down were compelled to rest for the night, and in the morning beheld, not only our foes of the day before, but the bands of Tall Bull, Big Whistler, Brave Shield and other chiefs around us, they having returned to defend their home."

"Your Indian messenger did his duty well, then; he came to me with your message and then, hastened on and instantly the Indians returned to defend their villages, and I greatly feared for the safety of you all."

"But you say Captain Raymond and seventy-five men are besieged in the old outpost?"

"Yes, sir; it was impossible to cut through the fifteen hundred warriors around us, and I advised the captain to remain and fight it out, while I came on to the fort for aid."

"And you broke through a line which seventy-five men dare not risk?"

"I rode a horse, colonel, that has few equals, and broke the line almost before the Indians knew of my intention," modestly returned the scout, and then he continued:

"Captain Raymond has four days' rations, plenty of ammunition, and a band of brave men, and can doubtless keep the Indians at

bay until aid reaches him, and it was for such that I now have come."

"You shall have it, my friend; three companies shall start at once, and I would spare more, but I have to head a squadron myself. I start on a duty of the greatest importance to me, as my daughter is now a prisoner in the hands of that renegade hound, Robin Hood," and the voice of the strong man trembled with emotion.

"Miss Vernon a captive to Robin Hood! This is indeed sad tidings; but how did it happen, colonel?" said the scout, deeply moved by the news.

"Well, your messenger, Wild Wolf, it seems succeeded in sending the Indians back to their hills; but Robin Hood, the blood-thirsty monster, would not return without leaving his mark, and finding out in some way that I was ready for him in the upper settlements he made a detour, and by night dashed into our lines, and carried off poor Nina, after which act he was off ere the slightest resistance could be offered."

"When did this happen, colonel?"

"Last night, just before daybreak; I was up the settlement, and returned not one hour before you did."

"He has then at once gone to his stronghold in the hills; two days' hard riding will take him there, and he has now but a day's start. Cheer up, colonel; call out all your men that you intended for your expedition after him, and with those to go to aid Captain Raymond we will at once start, for the outpost is almost on the trail to the stronghold of the outlaws, and after we have relieved the gallant captain we will decide what is best to be done."

"My friend, you give me hope, and it shall be as you say; but once I sentenced Robin Hood to death, and I have hunted him down for years, so that I dread he will take a terrible revenge upon me when he has the power, and were we to reach his stronghold I fear he would slay poor Nina ere I could recover her."

"Then, colonel, leave it to me, and I pledge you that I will rescue Miss Vernon; will you trust me?"

"Certainly, and if man can do it, you are the one."

"But come, you need rest and food ere we leave, so I will order supper, and throw yourself upon my bed and take a nap."

"I am like my horse, colonel, a short rest and a good meal causes us to feel as good as new."

"Comrade is now under the tender mercies of your negro groom, and three hours will be all the rest we need; it is now seven o'clock, so please have the men ready by ten."

So saying, the scout threw himself upon the colonel's couch and almost instantly was fast asleep, to awake at the appointed hour, partake of a hearty meal, and at the head of three hundred troopers, under the leadership of Colonel Vernon, ride forth to the aid of the besieged band in the ruined outpost on the river.

CHAPTER XIII.

RAISING THE INDIAN SIEGE.

TRUE to his word to Captain Raymond, the scout was but a few miles from the outpost on the evening of the fourth day.

Having made charge after charge upon the stockade, and with no successful result to themselves, the Indians had laid a regular siege to the gallantly defended stockade, intending to pick off from their arrows and rifles every man they could catch sight of by day or night, so that by thus reducing the defending force, they could in the end make one grand charge and carry the works.

Well knowing that the scout would bring relief for the outpost, they still believed it would be a week ere he could possibly return, and then only with a comparatively small force, for they did not think, with the settlement threatened, he could get many men to accompany him, and their own large numbers rendered them exceedingly brave.

But they had not counted on the power of endurance and speed of Comrade, or the dash and determination of the troopers, and upon the fourth day were little dreading an attack from any quarter, when suddenly, with a round of hearty cheers, the cavalry were upon them, for depending on their large numbers for protection, they had stationed no sentinels, as every smaller force invariably does. Right and left rode the gallant troopers, their rifles and revolvers cracking, and sabers falling with terrible execution, and appearing a far larger force in the darkness, the Indian warriors were seized with a panic and broke in wild confusion, followed hither and thither in their flight by the victorious troopers.

Then into the motte dashed the scout, Colonel Vernon and his escort, and loud and long were the cheers that went up from the stockade when they greeted their friends, and the defenders of the little fort dragged Prairie Rover from his horse and bore him around on their shoulders in triumph.

"Well, captain, I kept my word, and thank God I was able to do so," modestly said the scout.

"We certainly thank God that you were, my friend, for I have lost forty men, killed and wounded, and ere long I would have been a prisoner; but how you must have ridden!" and Ramsey Raymond warmly grasped the scout's hand.

"Colonel Vernon," said Prairie Rover, then turning to that officer, "the Indians have fled to their ruined villages to protect their families, for they evidently believe your force double what it is, and think you are coming after them."

"Now, men fight with desperation around their hearthstones, and thus would the Redskins fight, were you to attack them, which, to do would be madness upon your part."

"What would you suggest, scout?"

"That you return with your command at once to the fort—"

"Pardon me, but have you forgotten that my daughter is a captive in the hands of that wicked man, Robin Hood?" reproachfully said Colonel Vernon.

"No, sir; it is ever in my mind, and my advice is offered after matured thought on my part; return to the fort with your men, and you will thereby gain a good start ere the Indians know your intention, for if they were to follow you on your retreat, many a brave soldier would lose his life."

"Regarding the release of Miss Vernon, were you to follow on to the stronghold of Robin Hood, certain defeat would be the result, for the Indians would take your trail and you would be between two fires, and it is impossible for three thousand men, even, to openly attack the outlaw retreat with success; what strategy can be of another matter."

"Now, I have said that we have met before, and we have, for in following a certain trail, the whole aim of my life, I have worn many disguises, and once you entertained me at the fort in a garb you little believed covered an impostor; but of that we will not now speak."

"In disguise, suffice it to say, I have also visited the outlaw stronghold, and know it as well as does its chief, and therefore I am capable of acting with my eyes open."

"Leave all to me, return to the fort, and keep a close watch against surprise, and allow me to seek the robber stronghold, and I will rescue from captivity your daughter."

"Will you place full faith in me, Colonel Vernon?"

"Scout, you are a marvelous man, and I believe, will accomplish what you promise."

"Believe me, I trust you, and will do as you wish; but, for God's sake, save my poor Nina, for a father begs it of you to save his child."

"I have promised," replied the scout, and a few moments after he was hard at work rubbing down his faithful steed and companion, and feeding him upon the most luxuriant grass that could be found.

A substantial supper, a sleep of an hour, and the Prairie Rover moved out from the motte with the returning troopers, but once on the prairie, he bade farewell to Colonel Vernon and his companions, and set forth, alone, in a western direction, to soon disappear from sight in the darkness, bound upon the hazardous mission of rescuing from the outlaw stronghold the lovely Nina Vernon, and, strange as it may seem, none in that band were there who for a moment doubted but that his adventure would be covered with success, for the scout had never been known to fail in anything which he had undertaken.

Hence, with somewhat quieted minds, both Colonel Vernon and Captain Ramsey Raymond set forth upon their return to the fort.

CHAPTER XIV.

WITHIN THE STRONGHOLD.

WHEN the Prairie Robin Hood had determined upon his course regarding the settlement, he started at once to carry out his plan, but was warned by arrival of an Indian scout that the upper settlements in the valley were prepared to resist him, aided as they were by a number of troops under Colonel Vernon.

Instantly the face of the chief became radiant with cruel joy, and his orders to move rung out quick and stern.

Making a large detour from the settlements he suddenly darted at the speed of his horses in the direction of the fort, and in the stillness and darkness of night dashed within the line of settlers' homes and pounced upon the home of Colonel Vernon.

Awakened from a sound sleep Nina Vernon and her aunt suddenly discovered the tall form of the outlaw leader before them and heard his stern order:

"Miss Vernon, you will dress with great haste and accompany me."

In vain were the offers of bribes and earnest entreaties. Nina Vernon was compelled to obey, and with trembling hands and blanched face dressed herself in her riding suit, and the next moment was riding by the side of the chief as he rapidly rode away, followed by his band, fully a hundred in number.

It was a hard and cruel ride of three days, and none but a sturdy frontier girl could have borne the fatigue; but Nina kept up bravely, and upon the evening of the third day following her capture the hill country was reached, and in a deep recess of the highlands was found the robber encampment.

Rude in construction, hidden away in a lovely valley; defended upon one side by lofty and impassable highlands, and upon the other by a mighty flowing stream, the robber retreat was yet most picturesque, and the beauty of the scenery could not but charm Nina, worn out and sorrowful though she was.

Humble cabins, skin wigwags, and a few tents scattered along the river bank composed the homes of the renegade crew and the almost as wicked women and children who followed their fortunes; but, in a fairy like delirium, under the shadow of the highlands, and with a lawn sloping down to the banks of a tiny stream, was a spacious and comfortable cabin, the home of the chief, and hither was poor Nina borne.

With surprise, as she entered the cabin home, she noted the comforts around her, the humble but easy furniture, the clean flooring, neat walls adorned with crayon and water-color sketches, and a guitar lying near the window, which opened upon a wide piazza around which clung vines, evidently trained to grow there by some one of refined taste.

Across the open hallway from the room into which the chief had ushered Nina, was another room, which appeared like a dining hall, while back of it were two bed-chambers, as the maiden could see through the open doors, the linen in which was white and clean.

Surprised at all she saw around her Nina turned and glanced timidly into the face of the man, who, with all his crimes, had certainly treated her with marked respect, and seeing her look he said quietly:

"Miss Vernon, here shall be your home until I decide regarding your future fate, and no one shall intrude upon you; yes, one will be your companion, whom you will not I hope object to, and your wishes shall be attended to by my servants."

"Make yourself at home, please, even though you are beneath the roof of the outlaw chief, called the Prairie Robin Hood."

With a bow worthy of a man in polite society, the chief departed, and Nina was left to brood over her sorrows alone, and to worry her mind with devising some means of escape from her thrallhold.

"I must escape from here or ruin will be my fate."

"Have no fear of evil for you are safe," said a sweet voice near at hand, and turning quickly Nina beheld before her a young girl of wondrous beauty, who had silently entered the room.

"Thank you, oh, thank you, for those words, for you would not deceive a helpless girl," cried Nina, and springing forward she buried her face on the young girl's shoulder, for at last her strong will had broken down, and she was no longer the proud, defiant woman she had been in the presence of the robber chief.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 293.)

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Sunshine Papers.

An Affair of Business.

HAPPY BRIDEGROOM. "More money, madam—more money! Have you forgotten that my money has bought everything you possess—the very dress that you stand in?" *Fair Bride.* "No, sir; nor have I forgotten that your money has bought what stands in it."

No sentiment wasted between those two! She married him because she wanted money, or some one else decreed that she should have it; he married her for—what? Well, it is pretty safe to judge from the tone he took that he married her as a convenience; he wanted a wife; it was a possession he had not yet acquired, and that would serve him better in many ways than others could. So there were the regulation amounts of smiles and styles, and criticisms and platted presents, and ceremonial joys and pious congratulations, resulting in this union of hands—this marriage of convenience—this mere affair of business!

But, indeed, is not marriage, in this age, become pre-eminently a business matter?

There was a time, we are told, when marriage was regarded in the light of a most holy sacrament; when young women dreamed all manner of sweet illusions and rose-tinted visions concerning matrimony and husbands; but when, with maidenly modesty, they refrained from conversing of such serious and delicate subjects, until, with blushes, they spoke of their own assured future. Even then, methinks, their souls were too tender of their solemn joys to prate of them to every friend and acquaintance. Those were the days when knights, like Don Garcia Perez, would face death and an armed throng to recover their ladies' pledges, and the lowly-born Eginhart dared aspire to the hand of a princess, with equal faith that the glory of true manhood was equal in humble courtier and crowned king. But those times are as ancient as the legends they furnished. In this age, to the child—especially if it be feminine—marriage is a familiar theme from its cradle-days. No girl in her teens hesitates to discuss freely the subject of marriage. No maiden reaches that time described by Longfellow—

"Standing, with reluctant feet,
Where the brook and river meet,
Womanhood and childhood fleet,"

without having formed a very correct idea of "the match she must make."

The change lies here: We are living in the most prosaic age of practical theories, social rivalry, and monetary strife; an age in which we have learned that hearts may be measured for gold, and lives of self-devotion and true wedlock and soul-love be weighed and found wanting in the balance with a life of ease and triumph and social display; an age as different as possible from the old, knightly, legendary times; and though recollections of the latter make pleasant reading I am inclined to believe that we have no reason to be unthankful that our lines have fallen to us in different days.

Then I indorse the making marriage a chief aim of life, the light holding of its bonds, the careless discussion of it, the systematic arranging for monetary unions, the regarding it as an entirely business affair? To the last I answer, emphatically, yes! to the other propositions, no! The chief aim of every life should be to have lived it gloriously; to have made the world some better and brighter for having been in it. For

"One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name."

And marriage should be "but a means unto that end." Yet should not that means be a theme of careless discussion; and when our girls receive a more simple and natural training, and are educated to the pursuit of some knowledge or duty beyond the limits of school days, they will cease their trifling prating of it, but be doubly fitted to take upon themselves matrimonial responsibilities. Monetary unions—the lifelong sale of self for wealth—are disgraceful and frequent; Byron says:

"Maidens, like moths, are ever caught by glare,
And Mammon wins his way where seraphs might despair."

But the glory of true womanhood has not wholly departed; even yet some true hearts beat; some women there are who dare put aside the glitter of gold and popularity, to listen to the soft calls of honest love. But marriage bonds assumed from worthy or base motives, they should not be lightly held; therefore the assuming them should be a serious, important, and thoroughly business matter. For through the century and a half it has been written, foolish mortals have been realizing the truth of "Married in haste, we may repent at leisure."

In almost every country but our own marriage is a business affair wherein woman's will is little consulted; but our American girls are notably free to mark out their own destiny. When this must find its fulfillment in a married life, it is finest wisdom for them to be as

careful concerning this partnership they propose to enter as are their fathers concerning mercantile associations. When a man pays a girl the compliment of asking her to share his life, let her consider the proposal in all its bearings—make a careful investigation of its pros and cons; for I by no means advocate that a woman should marry only for love. A woman's heart is a strange piece of mechanism and sometimes its most powerful vibrations are evoked by careless or worthless hands. She may love a man who is supremely selfish, or inefficient, or unhealthy, or weak, or wicked, but it would be maddest folly for her to marry him. Let no girl marry out of pity, nor from fear, nor to save a man. Nine chances to ten a man who is going to ruin will go surely on and drag his family with him. Perhaps the acceptance of a proposal is urged upon a girl by friends or parents. She must remember that she alone has to give her life to her husband's keeping, and she has no right to defraud herself or him of happiness by making it a mere soulless duty. Possibly she needs a home, and the proposed marriage can furnish her it; let her question of her independence if she can receive charity while she has mental power and physical strength to win her own way in the world. Her suitor may be rich and elderly—she may recoil from his arms, but covet his gold; she thinks how soon he may die; she should think, likewise, if murder in the heart will accord with the vows she must make at the altar; and recollect that "they that marry ancient people, merely in expectation to bury them, hang themselves, in hope that one will come and cut the halter."

No matter who your suitor, or what the allurements of his proposal, fair maiden, remember that pure marriage must be based upon honor, respect, and truth. When you know that of your proposed partner you receive honor, and to him honor is due; when you feel that you respect each the other; when you are sure that no shadow of deceit or concealment exists between your hearts, then may you confidently subscribe to the terms of your partnership and feel that success and honor shall attend your "affair of business."

A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

PROVOKING PEOPLE.

How provoking and disagreeable some people can be when they make up their minds to be so, and how thoroughly despicable they can make themselves appear to their fellow-beings when they throw themselves, heart and soul, into being disagreeable! What a hateful man he is who can see no beauty in a flower-garden, and, because he cannot do so himself, he will not allow any one else to do so; consequently he begrudges the little bit of earth his wife wants to cultivate, and goes tramping over it with all the force and strength of an elephant.

Such a man as that doesn't deserve to have any soul-pleasure in his life if he denies them to others. He says flowers are all foolishness and were never meant for us to fool our time over. I wonder how he'd like to have people call his abominable pipe a nuisance! Wouldn't his angelic temper be somewhat ruffled if a body were to smash and crush his meerschaum as he does the lovely and innocent flowers? Now, I don't believe it is in human nature for any one to really hate the beautiful earthly gems; and those who say they do, say so out of mere disagreeableness, and just for the sake of being contrary. You may not believe it—and it does seem hard to believe that there are individuals who pass for human beings, who really take a delight in being provoking; I have met them, have conversed with and have been extremely glad to bid them "good-day," and I never asked them to call again.

They are beings who make fun of what you hold sacred; they laugh at what you suffer; they malign your friends, talk scandal against those whom you hold dear, have an insane delight in telling you all that others have said against you, will open old sores and cause them to bleed afresh, and act in such a manner as to provoke one to use harsh language and show them the door. They may call themselves ladies and gentlemen but they are—hyenas!

If any one has aught of evil or petty spite to say of us, does it improve the matter by telling you and me of it? Does it put us in any more agreeable frame of mind with those who have said the disagreeable words, or toward the tale-bearers themselves? It provokes us enough to retaliate and tell these same tale-bearers what we have heard the other party say against them; then follows a slight coolness between various parties and "trouble in the camp" generally.

These provoking people delight in telling you how the story or novel turns out when you don't want to be told, but do want to find out for yourself; they are sure to tell you how the drama ends, thus making you lose one-half of your anticipated enjoyment. They would not like to be thus informed in advance, and that is the very reason they tell you—because they have such a provoking, disagreeable disposition. One feels like putting an extinguisher over them, and, if one only could, it doesn't seem as if it would be too severe a punishment. I think there would be a great demand for extinguishers, and I should have to buy mine by the gross.

It isn't all such smooth sailing in life as one would imagine, and I think those who wield the pen for a living have their share of provoking people. You wouldn't like to have people come into your sanctum and read over your manuscripts, make comments upon what you have written, and suggest improvements, and, to add to their disagreeableness, have them tell you they've already seen in print something like what you are writing.

When they have left, you discover that they have been amusing themselves by scrawling their names on the back of the paper you have just prepared for the press. You notice them going down the street. How you would like to throw that inkstand out of the window at them! But, you don't do so, because you never heard of Job throwing inkstands at any one. But, again, Job never was so tempted, even if he had had an inkstand handy!

Then there are those provoking people who come in late to the theater or opera, leave before the performance is over, and keep up an eternal whispering and loud conversation while in their seats. They may think it shows their "quality," but it seems to me they couldn't so show their want of "quality" in any other way. I should think they would be ashamed to act in that way, but such creatures don't appear to have much shame to them. If they don't want to enjoy the entertainment, why do they come at all? Have others no rights that they are bound to respect? They should stay at home, where their company can be better appreciated. If allowed to go at large they are enough to provoke a person to pin a label to their clothes, on which should be printed, in large letters, "Beware of the Bore!"

EVE LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

A Chapter on Tombstones.

I APPROACH this subject gravely. I don't know why I should choose such a subject, but I feel sad and out of humor, and I also feel out of money.

This last is what suggested tombstones, I think.

Somehow when I am low-spirited I think either of my mother-in-law or tombstones.

I sit here out of heart, with nothing in my pockets but my hands, and meditate, as it were, among the tombstones.

A tombstone man presented me with his card to-day and solicited my patronage. He is a very kind-hearted man, and I wonder he don't die.

He is as bad as the undertaker who last winter presented me with a coffin as a specimen of his work and asked me to give him a pun.

It is down in the cellar full of onions.

I feel as sorrowful as night as a tombstone, and if I could hire myself out to peddle tombstones I think I would be in my native element to a great degree.

When I read on tombstones just how happy and well off the gentlemen are who hang out below, I think they should not be so greatly mourned.

Whenever I feel a little bit more serious and out of humor than I do to-night, I sigh for a forty thousand dollar tombstone, with my virtues carved all over it, and a lamb on top.

Be careful that you live so that the hand on your monument that points up should not be reversed.

Tombstones are mileposts on the road of life, not to show where you are going but to show where you have gone.

Don't get into the habit of needing one, for if you do you are gone and the most glorious epitaph will be of no service to you.

There was Scroggs over the way there; he never treated his wife well, and when she got tired of it and died, he put up a ten thousand dollar granite monument, and I know it was just because he was just ten thousand dollars glad, for he married again in six months.

I remember how another boy and I were cutting across some fields and accidentally came across a—a pumpkin patch.

We lingered near and ate patiently about sixteen watermelons until it got very dark, and equally late; the owner came out to see whether any of his melons were stealing little boys, and we thought it was a very good idea, and we each took a different direction, and a melon, and after crossing several ditches and fields I struck a graveyard, and got over the fence slower than I had gotten over the others. I tumbled over a grave the first thing; then I thought I saw the ghost of Abimelech's father, and dodged into an old grave that had been dug up, and burst the melon that was accompanying me. Every tombstone grew whiter and everything else darker. I took the corners off of about twenty tombstones in no time at all, and hadn't a whole corner left on my body. Every tombstone seemed to jump up and take after me, and when I brought up in a briar-bush I didn't stop, although it held on.

Every tombstone seemed to burst from its socket, so did my eyes. When an old white cow jumped up before me, and made me dodge against a monument which I couldn't knock down, I thought I was gone for good, and began to say "Now I lay me." I thought that graveyard was ten miles wide. My hair stood straight up on its head; my heart beat like a steamhammer; I tried to go fast but could hardly catch my breath. I hastily vowed if I ever got out of that to split wood without growling, to say my prayers every time I thought of them, and never to steal watermelons again; and this scare had such a beneficial effect toward making a reformed boy of me that I don't think I ever after stole more than four hundred watermelons. I was greatly improved by this terrible fright. Even when I think of it now, sad and serious as I am, I am all of a tremble, and wouldn't care a cent if I only had the watermelons.

I once bought a marble shop at sheriff's sale, and presented my friends with the tombstones.

When a man gets ornamented with one of these, he is not of much use to his relations in this world.

But I am sure there is no fun in tombstones, only to their manufacturer.

I once saw a tombstone out in Kansas put over a noted jayhawker to keep him down that had two pistols carved on it and the motto:

"Earth counts a mortal less,
Heaven an angel more."

I read to-day on a little tombstone this:

"Our little tiny, twenty Jim
Has closed his little jaws;
No more of cholera for him—
His apples were in cause,
Gone where apples are ripe."

I have got so now that I can go by a graveyard without a shotgun, and turn my head away only a very little.

When I was a boy, if a graveyard was the only place I had to spend the day in, I would have a better knowledge now than any other knowledge or collegian.

People who never get a tombstone put up over their remains when they no longer remain are treated with great condescension.

Distinguished people are often chiseled out of marble; so are tombstone men.

Some people who think they deserve to be enshrined in statuary really do not deserve any statue.

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

A WET BLANKET.

To young creatures full of life and energy, who exist in their youthful strength and freedom of limb, a timid mother is a very tyrant. She will not allow her girls to skate because Sir John Franklin was lost among icebergs; nor to ride because fox-hunters sometimes get their necks broken; nor to row because young men injure themselves in those dreadful boat races. They may not have a pet dog for fear it should go mad, nor any acronite or monkshood in their gardens for fear they should poison themselves. The timid mother forbids her daughters to visit among the poor, as they might take the small pox, and will not allow one of them to go alone outside the avenue gate from her dread of garroters. The description which she gives of the neighboring fields is appalling. She represents them to be the lairs of mad bulls, savage tramps, venomous snakes, and wild hares. Her girls cannot propose to either work or play, which she does not prove to be encompassed with dangers horrible and hitherto unthought-of. In their childish days they were not allowed a rocking-horse for fear it should overbalance, nor a swing for fear the rope might break, nor a pocket-knife lest they should cut their fingers. Thus, through the haunting fear of what might happen, all the sweetness is taken from their lives.

Topics of the Time.

"The first step toward wealth," said Old Ben, F., "is the choice of a good wife," whereupon some cynical rejected adds: "and the first step toward securing a wife is the possession of good wealth." Which is very unreasonable. We know a whole brigade of pretty girls just dying for a chance to say *yes* to any nice fellow who hasn't a cent but what his rich father gives him. Some how or another these "nice fellows" always have rich fathers. The fellows who are not "nice" are sure to have poor fathers. Which is queer.

Wolves are yet numerous in certain parts of France. In the department of Ardèche the ravens are even yet committing great ravages. A few weeks ago seventy-two sheep were taken from one flock. Bears are not at all uncommon in Germany and Italy. We have not, therefore, in this country, all the hunting sport. Many forests yet exist in Central and Southern Europe which even in this country would be deemed large. Some of them are very old and wild.

The use of vinegar, by young ladies, to reduce their too rapidly developing fleshiness, is a secret known to all womankind; but the positively dangerous nature of the treatment is not realized, else the remedy would be rarely used. A case in point is reported from Portland, where a young lady growing too "plump" was advised to drink a wine glass of vinegar daily. She did so, and the account says: "Her plumpness diminished. She was delighted with the success of the experiment, and continued it for more than a month. Then she began to have a cough; but it was dry at its commencement, and was considered as a slight cold which would go off. Meantime from dry it became moist, a slow fever came on, and a difficulty of breathing; her body became lean and wasted away; night sweats, swelling of the feet and of the legs, succeeded, and a diarrhoea terminated her life." The acid produced permanent demoralization of the blood, suspended proper digestion, arrested the secretion, and ended in insatiable irritation, which resulted in death. Beware, girls, how you drink vinegar or eat lemons for arresting a growing tendency to flesh. Work it off by exercise and severe diet, but remember that "any medicine" which will restrict the tendency to adiposity must be taken at the peril of health and life.

"Where is the hoe, Sambo?" "Wild de rake, massa." "Well, where is the rake?" "But where are they both?" "Wy bof together. By golly, massa, you pears to be very 'ticular dis mornin'."

Corn cobs are extensively used in Europe for firelighters. They are first steeped in hot water containing two per cent. of saltpetre, and after being dried at a high temperature, are saturated with fifty per cent. of resinous matter. These lighters, which are sold at three to four dollars the thousand, are employed with advantage and economy in private houses and for lighting furnaces. That cobs, thus prepared, or simply dipped in a solution of asphaltum and then dried, are not used in this country, is somewhat singular. Enough cobs are produced in every section of the country to light all the fires of each locality, and yet they are year by year thrown away and the expensive substitute of prepared pine wood is called into requisition. A little common sense could be used with much profit, in this matter.

Ah, that eager grasp of the hand; that anxious inquiry about your wife and the babies; that kindly solicitude concerning your financial welfare; yes, there's no mistaking it. He's a candidate. After election it wouldn't hurt his feelings a bit to hear that your wife had gone into a galloping consumption from a cold contracted at an open air political meeting to which you had taken her to hear the candidate orate; nor will he hesitate to call your too-headed babies "dirty brats" after the election has dashed his hopes. The candidate before election and after is two wholly different persons.

Benevolent persons will learn with regret that chills and fever prevail in all parts of the old State of Kentucky, and that quinine cocklebur is a favorite morning drink in place of the bourbon straight, the usual beverage. In Alton, Ill., we have the authority of a Chicago paper that four million grains of quinine have been sold this year! and yet we are told the shakes are *not* stopped along all the rivers. Where is the chologocum? He used to kill or cure in three weeks—usually kill, which is better than to shake a whole season. Give the benefactor a three months permit and he'll "knock the socks off" the quinine vendors as well as make it live for the undertakers. Our Whitehouse's patent Acute Extremities ought to find favor.

We can't say that we regard the "science" of handkerchief flirtation with a great degree of favor, considering its *misuse* as a medium for secret communications. When used from no questionable motive the "Code" may be both amusing and convenient. As now accepted it is as follows: Drawn across the lips—Desirous of an acquaintance. Drawn across the eyes—I am sorry. Drawn across the cheek—I love you. Drawn through the hand—I hate you. Drawn across the forehead—We are watched. Taking it to the center—You are too willing. Dropping it—We will be friends. Twirling in both hands—Indifference. Twirling it in right hand—I wish to be rid of you. Twirling it in left hand—I love another. Over the shoulder—Follow me. Under the chin—You please me. To the lips—A kiss. To the bosom—Hidden merits. Opposite corners in both hands—Wait for me. Winding around, forefinger and thumb—An engagement. Winding around right finger—I am married. Winding around left hand—I wish your company. Winding around right hand—Attachment. Winding around neck—Warm feelings. Winding around waist—I desire a return of affection. Winding around right arm—I live for thee. Winding around left arm—Keep your promise. Folding it—I wish to speak to you. Letting it remain on the eyes—You are cruel. Placing it to the right ear—You have changed. Placing it to the left ear—Temptation. Placing it in the pocket—No more at present.

It is probable that the banana will be widely cultivated in the South in future. Acres of them have been planted in the worn out cotton fields of some of the Gulf States, while in Florida this culture has become a thriving business. The trees grow readily without cultivation and rapidly yield fruit. The fruit has been remarkably cheap and plentiful in the New York market this summer and is so at this present time. It is fast becoming a great favorite. Florida oranges and bananas are quite superceding those from the islands. This is truly a great country where can be produced almost all the best fruits, grains, plants and wood of the tropic and temperate zones.

What's all this talk about the currency and the five-twines and the seven-thirties that I hear about, Mike? "Why, bliss your soul, don't ye know, Pat? It means that the Government wants to make the laborin' man work from now-winty in the mornin' till seven-thirty in the evenin'." "Och, ye spalpeen! May the devil choke him!" And this is not a bad illustration of the comprehension of the currency question in many quarters. A visit to Ohio, during the late canvass in that State, gave us such new ideas in regard to the "circulation medium" that we expect soon to see gold at a discount, and greenbacks at a premium. Gold miners and silver diggers will be sorry to hear that their occupation is gone, but, as some encouragement to them, we announce that we will continue to receive coin at this office in subscription and for books—until further notice.

Bell's Life tells of an extraordinary hand at whist: "T. M. and three friends were playing whist on Tuesday evening. During the third game T. M.'s partner dealt and turned up the ace of spades. On looking at his hand he found the whole of the same suit. T. M. says he has seen whist played for more than fifty years, but never remembers such a circumstance happening before."

Miss Mary L. A. asks for information, saying: "In reading a novel, recently, I came to a reference to the Sibylline Books. Can you tell me what they are? The legends of the Sibyls, who were supposed to write from direct inspiration, came to Tarquin the Second, offering nine volumes for sale at an extortionate price. Upon his refusal to buy them, the Sibyls, in a fit of despair, burned the remaining six; again refused, she burned three more, when the monarch bought the last three, and the Sibyl disappeared. The Sibylline Books were supposed to be prophetic, and carefully guarded and consulted upon all State occasions. Being destroyed by fire, another collection of the inspired writings was made by sending to all parts of Greece. A fuller account than our space allows will be found in any classic dictionary."

Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.

Readers and Contributors.

To CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage. To MSS. sent in the blank order. Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only when stamps accompany the inclosure, for such return. No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MSS." MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS.; as "copy," third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter. Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, tearing off each page as it is written, and carefully filing it in full or page MSS. unavailable to us are well worth of use.—All experienced authors and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

Declined: "St. Elmo and St. Twelmo;" "The Ghost in the Garret;" "Nameless story by same author;" "Look Onward;" "No Room;" "The Deserted Home;" "Rouge et Noir;" "Guilty or Not Guilty;" "Slater Agnes;" "The Turk Abroad;" "A Question Answered."

Accepted: "Nameless Love;" "Uncle George's Old Sock;" "A Taste of Spruce;" "The Girl of the Time;" "A Lost Prize;" "Meeting and Greeting;" "A Doubly-won Stake;" "Madmen All!"

THE REVIEW.—The cheapest way to get to Australia or China is by rail vessel from New York.

OBED E. N. All lotteries are essential swindles. Avoid them, by all means.

MISS HAZEN O. Very few sketch writers indeed command \$10 per sketch.

AGARRA. Fourier is dead. Pity his system wasn't dead, also.

M. E. T. Problem has already been answered. See back numbers.

BOXER. Write to American News Co. There is such a book. Don't know its price.

N. A. D. Don't know where to see the play, and don't know what publisher would care for it.

A. P. B. The stories cannot be republished in this paper, but may hereafter be given in cheap book-form.

BUFFALO BILL. The "Sword Hunters," by the author of "Lance and Lassie," will be given some time this fall.

C. W. A. We know not whether the person named is living or dead.—Thanks for your kind regards for the Journal.—Can't say about the portraits at present.

OSKALOOSA BOY. The Blackhawk war occurred in 1832. It ended by driving the Sac and Fox Indians from southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois over into Iowa—what was left of them.

LONG JIM. Will give "Silent Hunter" as No. 7 of the new series of Twenty-cent Novels, to issue Dec. 25th. The other novel named may also be given in the same series.

M. E. T. (2d). If two fathers marry each other's daughter the offspring would of course be cousins—as if the fathers were not related by marriage.

O. A. B. The odor of kerosene in the milk is produced by burning kerosene in a paraffin but not in milk. Milk is a very rapid absorber of odors and flavors.

CASABODRA. The exact height of the falls of Niagara, on the American side, is 168 feet. Depth of water a few rods below the falls is 100 feet. The bridge is 132 feet. The falls are slowly receding.

Mrs. B. M. Mrs. E. F. Elliot, author of the beautiful love story, "Love in a Maze," is the "noted Mrs. Elliot" you indicate—author of "Women of the Revolution," "Clout of Washington," etc., etc. She is one of our favorite serial writers.

DAUGHTER PRACTITIONER. It is a very good idea to send with each serial MS. a syllabus or epitome of the resume of the story, by which the editor may be guided in his conclusions as to the story's nature. If the resume gives good promise as to story the MS. will be sure to be carefully read.

MISS FARRINGTON OF THE HILL. See Topics of the Time for the "Handkerchief Code." While it may be desirable to understand it, a young lady should be especially careful not to sign her name in a note, in a mode of secret communication apt to be abused, and through it many a lady has been insulted.

O. O. D. Heads become bald because the roots of the hair die. The hair is not falling out, but the roots make them grow again.—Can't advise you where to go to obtain employment. Stay where you are and do the best you can. Your penmanship is good, but you must learn to dictate—to use dictating letters, etc. Now that you have leisure, study some good work on composition. It will pay.

H. O. E. Quicksilver is a metal, and is found in nature sometimes in a pure state, but more often in combination. It has been found in all parts of the world, and is one of the heaviest of metals. It is extensively used in the arts, and in different combinations, a most valuable medicinal agent. It can only be rendered solid or frozen by a degree of cold, indicated by forty degrees below zero.

W. E. C. We say to you and to other correspondents who request the republication of their work in our popular serials, that we cannot comply—save only in rare instances. Secure them while they are in print. Send them to the publisher in cheap book-form, in our twenty or twenty-five cent series, but as only a few can be so given, at best, the only safe way to secure them is to obtain extra copies as they issue in the serial.

WILD BOB. You, as the father, are the natural and legal guardian of your children. Unless the wife can show just cause for retaining the children a suit at law will compel her to yield them to you, guardian, or at least to give you constant and free access to them. If you have just cause for divorce the courts will readily grant it. Do not, under any plea or excuse, talk of using a wife another until you are legally rid of your first wife.

J. T. N. Phila. BEADLE'S DIME DIALOGUES contain numerous pieces introducing German and Irish characters. No Such Word. No. 14—"The Victim," in No. 9—"Mrs. Luckland's Economy," in No. 10, all are good. The last named probably will suit your wants.

DOUBTER. The Queen Mary of Tennyson's much talked-of drama is the "Bloody Mary," in whose reign (1553-1558) so many of our popular poets were born. She was daughter of Henry VIII, by Catharine of Aragon, his first wife. Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry VIII, by Anne Boleyn, Henry had six wives in all—two of whom he beheaded to make way for others.

APPLETON'S CLIM. Parchment is the same as "vellum." It is made from the skins of very young kids and lambs, by a process of liming to remove the hair and fatty substances, then carefully stretched on a frame, and dried in the sun. It is a moon-knife, scraped on both sides, the flesh side is then covered with fine chalk and rubbed with pumice-stone, and, after being leveled and dried, is polished with preparation of gum-arabic and whites of eggs.

JIM DUREY, Locust Valley. Always take a lady's left hand to assist her in a carriage, giving her your left arm. When a person offers you a glass, show your civility, no more neglect a "thank you" than if you were in a parlor.



Gliding close along the inner shore, so as to be enfolded in the thin ribbon of shadow, he discerned the ghostly canoe and occupant!

DOOMED.

BY EBBE E. REXFORD.

Last night I walked the silent street
As free as any man; and now
In fettering bands my pulses beat;
The brand of Cain is on my brow.
My brain whirled when I try to think;
I see before me, all the while,
A white, dead face. The star-beams blink
And jeer me, like an evil smile.
I saw them coming down the walk;
His arm was round her, and I heard
The hum of low and tender talk—
So low I caught not any word.
I saw her look into his eyes
In love's own trustfulness. The sight
Roused fiercest passions in my soul;
I know my face and lips were white.
He plucked a flower beside the path
And put it in her yellow hair;
My brain seethed in a sudden wrath.
What right had he to put it there?
What right had he, a smooth-faced boy,
My heart leaped in a sudden joy
When something whispered in my ear:
"Oh, fool! to let him win away
The love you prize, nor lift a hand!
One blow would thrust him from your way,
Revenge is something sweet and grand!"
They came toward me. All the while
My finger's clutched a dagger's hilt;
I saw him look at her and smile—
That smile seems mocking at my guilt.
He kissed her! I can hardly tell
What happened then! My brain was wild:
A flash of steel—a cry! He fell.
And falling, spoke her name, and smiled!
How strange that scene! how weird and wild!
His white, dead face! her frightened eyes!
The moonlight mocked at me and smiled;
I heard the owl's forboding cries.
What will the end be? Ah, I know!
I see a scaffold grim and bare,
And faces, eager, fierce, below;
I hear the sound of solemn prayer.
And then, ah, then! I dare not think!
I shudder in a wild affright:
My God! I heard the hammer's click!
They build a scaffold in the night!

A Woman's Forgiveness.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

IRLA JOY lifted her sweet, lily-like face to meet her lover's eyes—handsome, admiring eyes, that very seldom looked upon the girl's face without the consciousness that in her love he had gained a wondrous treasure. Just now, however, there was a faint shade of amused annoyance on Cecil Clyde's countenance, and, as Irla laid her hand caressingly on his arm, her bright eyes reflected the shadow in his own.
"You are not going to scold me, are you, Cecil? I hope you will not say anything to make me feel you do not think I did right?"
Earnest, womanly, hazel eyes were reading his face as the sweet, undaunted voice spoke.
"How is it possible for you ever to do anything that is not right, Irla? It is not that I think you did wrong in being Quixotic enough to offer a home to this obscure working-girl, because you fancy there is latent talent in her. Evidently you feel it your duty to give her a chance in the world; but—I confess I felt a little amazed when I heard of this latest impulse of yours."
"Impulse! Oh, Cecil, please don't speak that way! Indeed, I conscientiously took little Estelle Despard from the drudgery of her miserable home. I know she has a surpassingly sweet voice, that Professor Lewiski says will make her fortune if cultivated."
"Yes—and what if such be the case? I can't see why it need concern you, Irla."
She half-shrunk under his cold, questioning demur.
"Cecil, I fear you are willful. Don't you think I am the very best one to help her? I, who have almost an unlimited fortune, and not a relative in the wide world? What business have I to hoard away money, when I am able to do so much good in the world with it? Cecil, dear, tell me you are not vexed because Estelle Despard has come to me."
Her fair hands lay on his shoulders; her pleading, lovely face uplifted so near his own that he could not resist the temptation to kiss the scarlet mouth, so eloquent in this little

Spanish girl's favor—this shabby, awkward, sallow-skinned foreigner.

He half-laughed as he gave Irla his arm, and they sauntered into the music-room.

"There is no use of differing with you, little duchess. Just consider I am highly delighted at the prospect of a rival in your estimation."

"Cecil! you know you will always reign undisputed lord! You know how I love you, Cecil!"

He caressed the warm, pulsing fingers that trembled at his master-touch.

"Darling! punish me by a sight of this lucky, raw-boned genius, with her consciousness of hands and feet, and—"

Irla laid her hand over his mustache.

"Reserve your compliments, please—at least for one minute."

She laughed, and then opened the curtains that separated the elegant little sanctum devoted to the goddess of the lute and guitar, from the larger music-room, where a square grand stood open, opposite a majestic-piped organ.

On the very threshold of this charming little retreat, Cecil Clyde halted, an expression of keenest surprise and admiration on his lips.

"Irla! the most entrancing tableau I ever saw in my life. Who is she?"

A little delighted laugh rippled from Miss Joy's lips as she looked triumphantly in her lover's eyes; then raised her voice:

"Estelle! Mr. Clyde and I beg pardon for intruding, but I want you to sing for us—will you? Mr. Clyde, this is Miss Despard, my little protégée."

A bewitchingly beautiful girl, petite, graceful as Hebe, arose from a low crimson velvet hassock, and returned Mr. Clyde's bow with the ease and assurance of a court-dame.

And this was the "shabby, awkward, sallow-skinned foreigner," the "raw-boned genius, with the consciousness of hands and feet"—this magnificent girl, with eyes like dusky stars, and hair rippling loosely off her forehead in a jetty, flossy glory! This girl, with her warm Spanish complexion, and her mouth fit for the kisses of the gods! This—Estelle Despard! Irla watched the changing expression of his face with triumphant delight.

"Well, Cecil, do you think you can get along with this formidable rival of yours?"

He laughed at Irla's bright, happy face.

"I do not think it will be very hard work. Miss Despard, do you know Miss Joy is saying terrible things about you?"

A low, tinkling laugh that made Clyde think of silver bells, and an answer that had only the most faintly suggestive, bewitching hint of Spanish accent.

"I am sure she never did before, and first offenses are always easily passed over. Shall I sing, *Dreams*, Irla?"

She sat gracefully down on the vivid-hued hassock, her black tissue dress lying on the carpet around her like a shadow of darkness, out of which her fair hands and tropical face arose like some splendid bloom.

She flung a wide band of cardinal ribbon over her shoulder and swept the guitar strings with skilled fingers; a dozen rare, plaintive chords, and then, in a low, passionate voice began the sweet song, while Cecil Clyde and Irla listened.

An hour afterward the lovers were saying adieu on the star-lighted veranda.

"I am so glad you like her, Cecil. It would have been a great grief to me if you two had not been friends."

And he kissed her sweet, trusting face.

"I could love any one for your sake, Irla!"

She remembered it afterward what they both said, and with the memory of that night came a remembrance of the sweet scent of honey-suckle and June roses, that haunted her all her life.

The latest summer flowers had faded, and in places the leaves were donning their bravery of scarlet and gold, as if impatient of the arrival of their liege, King Frost.

The air was slumberously quiet, and peaceful, with a goldenly purple haze floating mistily over the hill top. A time when nature steps right royally along and it seems a source of exquisite happiness to be alive and breathe the fragrant, spicy air.

To Irla Joy this glorious autumn time had come as it ever had come, fraught with perfect content; only, it seemed to the girl, as she stood bareheaded under the grand, sad trees of the pine wood, that God had been too good to her; that it seemed as if no mortal deserved the measure of happiness that had been meted to her.

Cecil's love—that was first, greatest, and sweetest of boons, the secret of her life, its one grand hope and crowning pride. And the reward of a good conscience that she had done her duty to one less favored than she, of God's children, Estelle Despard, with her silver throat and wonder.

To day, Irla seemed unusually peaceful, unusually thoughtful, almost sad; such a feeling as dying summer days bring to sensitive souls.

She had not seen Estelle since early morning, for the girl had pleaded past neglect of sundry exercises for her voice, and thus gained solitude.

Several hours ago Irla had heard snatches of wild, jubilant melody, but there had been silence since, and now the dinner bell was ringing, and the last western shadows were gilding the motionless tree summits.

Irla went in, calm, so fair to see, and waited in patient serenity for Estelle to come.

Then, after fifteen minutes, rung for the St. Julian and chicken *mayonnaise*.

"Tell Jeannette to go to Miss Estelle's room and—"

The maid interrupted the order with a scared, white face.

"Miss Irla, she's gone! all the beautiful jewels you gave her, and her brown silk walking suit and hat! I knew it before I saw this!"

Irla had arisen, surprised and alarmed, and took from Jeannette's hand a visiting card with Estelle's name on one side and a penciled message on the other, that Irla read as if it had been her death warrant.

"You will receive this at seven this afternoon, I write it at one o'clock. At three I shall be far away from here, and Cecil Clyde's wife. I dare not ask you to forgive me."

And underneath, as if written before the preceding lines, words that smote her as words never had smitten her before, or would have power to do so again.

They were in Cecil's hand, and said:

"What Estelle will write is the truth. Since the hour I first saw her it has been inevitable. God pity you, Irla, and visit the sin on my head."

She didn't faint, or cry out, or sit like a statue. She gave directions for dinner to be removed, then went up to the sacredness of her bedroom, and fell on her knees.

"My God! My God!—be merciful to me in this dreadful hour!"

That was her one moan, her only complaint; only the servants shrunk from her marble-white face, and piteous, haunted eyes, as the days went by, and Cecil Clyde came no more.

Then, when the winds and storms of November were playing havoc, there came into the colorless, eventless life of Irla Joy, a sudden, sharp shaft—a telegram, bidding her come to him, for sweet mercy's sake, and signed Cecil Clyde.

For why, for what, she never stopped to ask, until she was face to face with a dying man, tossing in the agonies of fever, yet with every nerve burning with consciousness—Cecil Clyde, smitten with malignant typhus fever, and his wife lying helpless in the room beside him.

There were nurses, and doctors, and every relief that money could buy—except the sight of Irla Joy's face, without which Cecil Clyde could not die in peace.

"I knew you would come! I knew you were not afraid. Oh, Irla! Irla! I am reaping the fruit of my treachery to you!"

She laid her cold hand on his parched, eager lips.

"I have come to be of service to you, Cecil—not to recall the past. You have the present—try to improve it by getting well for Estelle's sake."

She never permitted him to refer to it again; nor from her calm, stoical manner would he have guessed the anguish at her heart as she watched him stepping into the shadow of eternity.

Hour after hour she knelt by his pillow, cooling his hot lips and bathing his scorching head; while, with dumb, eloquent misery, he

would occasionally press her hand, and look in her white, pitiful face. Until the very last, when his feet were in the dark valley, when he grasped her true hand with a sudden grip that startled her, and essayed to carry it to his lips, failed, and gasped the last word he ever framed:

"Forgive!"

Then she bent over him, shaken to her very soul.

"Cecil! Cecil! if my forgiveness could only save your precious life!"

And then—Irla thought of the girl-wife in the next room, so early widowed, so early bereft, but not so hopelessly stricken as her own joyless life.

"You will promise me, Estelle? The big house is very lonely, and there is room, and to spare, for you."

Mrs. Clyde drooped her head, in painful distress.

"Irla, how can you do it? I know there is room in the house I have laid waste, but can there be in your heart for me?"

Irla smiled—not the olden, heartfelt smile, but a patient, kindly smile.

"Come and see, dear. You loved him—how could you help it? I loved him, too, and he has gone from us both. The only difference between us is—you have the sweet privilege of wearing your widow's robes for him, while mine are arrayed at my heart. Come to me, Estelle; for surely you do not grudge me his memory!"

A tear-bedewed face—the same perfect face that had bewitched Cecil Clyde, was buried at Irla Joy's feet.

"Irla! Irla! never did I know before what a woman's forgiveness was! Oh, Irla! my saint! my angel!"

Afterward, when mild summer was holding high carnival over field and wood, and they laid Cecil Clyde's baby boy in its mother's arms, and the women's tears and smiles mingled, Irla whispered in Cecil's widow's ear:

"I think now, I am quite content. Are we not rich, with one Cecil in heaven and one with us here?"

And their life flowed quietly on, unbroken by pangs, save when the late, sad summer days come, and the fragrance of late roses and honeysuckle bring transiently home to the true, faithful heart, the memory of that last night of perfect faith and trust.

Nick Whiffles' Pet:

OR,
NED HAZEL, THE BOY TRAPPER.

BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NIGHT SPY.

AY! while Mackintosh and Nick Whiffles, and the men, who were constantly glancing over their shoulders, were gazing at the mysterious canoe and its occupant, it had disappeared as a flash of sunlight is sometimes obscured by the passing shadow.

The Scotchman rubbed his eyes and looked again.

"It is gone, sure enough!" he muttered, as he sat down, disappointed, chagrined and the least bit frightened; "what has become of it, Nick?"

"I ain't acquainted with the kind of animiles called spirits," was the prompt reply. "I've tried chasing her afore, but wot's the use?"

"I ain't prepared to believe in ghosts and such nonsense," was the stubborn reply. "For all that female has got out of the way, in a style which I don't exactly understand, I am satisfied that she is real flesh and blood, and like enough some outlandish contrivance of the very Indians we are going to visit."

The men had been quick to detect the *faux pas*, and were now pulling with a steady, slow stroke, as if they were wearied with their exertion. Mackintosh permitted them to do this for some time longer in the hope of seeing the Phantom Princess again; but, satisfied that her disappearance was for that night at least, he gave the orders to stop for the night.

Once more the prows were turned in shore, and the crew landed. The prows of the boats were pulled up the bank, the blankets taken out, and two huge fires kindled. Around these stretched the score or so of men, their feet toward the fire, and their heads outward. In a few moments, the only ones who were awake were the two acting as sentinels, and whose duty it was to keep the camp-fires burning brightly.

As was his invariable custom, when the two were traveling together, Nick Whiffles and Ned Hazel were enfolded in the same blanket. With their bodies so close that the warmth was mutual and reciprocal, the two passed off into sweet and refreshing slumber.

It was a strange and powerful tie of love that united the grizzled old trapper, and the fair-haired, ruddy-cheeked boy, whose face and appearance proved him to be of no mean birth.

The unravelling of the mystery of the Phantom Princess, demands at this point that another personage should receive more particular notice. That personage is one of the men who is now acting as sentinel over the sleeping trappers.

His name is Hugh Bandman, an Englishman by birth, who has been in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company for something over ten years. He is pleasing in appearance, of rather a sad countenance, but there is none who stands higher for honesty, modest daring, and perfect trustworthiness in every respect. He was silent and rather uncommunicative, except now and then, but he was held in the highest respect by his associates. There was something connected with his earlier history, before he left England, known only to Mackintosh, which doubtless threw a shadow over his life, and had much to do with his burying himself from the civilized world in the wilds of British America.

He was in the boat containing the director of the brigade, and none rowed harder than he for the purpose of overtaking the Phantom Princess. It had been noticed by all those who were acquainted with him, that he always showed a peculiar rest in engaging in any enterprise or adventure that seemed to offer danger or curious experience.

To-night he was more moody than common. With his gun at his shoulder in the usual manner of a sentinel, he paced back and forth, looking down the river, as if in quest of the phantom that had caused him and his companions such wonderment an hour before.

After gathering enough wood to keep the camp fires burning brightly for some time to come, he said to his companion:

"You can keep watch a half-hour or more while I am gone."

His friend nodded to signify his willingness, and he at once moved away from the camp and disappeared in the gloomy depths of the surrounding wood.

In a brief time Hugh Bandman was making his way along the shore of Elk river, moving with the stealth of a Blackfoot Indian upon the trail of a foe. So silently indeed did he advance that he might have passed without an arm's length of the listening red-skin, without his presence being discovered.

He did not pause until he reached a point about a quarter of a mile below the camp. Here the dense undergrowth came down to the very edge of the stream, and offered a most secure hiding-place even at noonday. Secretly, in this cover, he prepared to watch the surface of the river, flowing so calmly beneath the radiance of the moon.

"I wonder if I am to see her again," he muttered, as he seated himself. "I thought I caught a glimpse of the boat awhile ago."

Looking to the right and left, his view was quite extended up and down the river, but his sight failed to reveal anything, and he drew a deep sigh of disappointment.

"I can't stay here long. I wouldn't have Mackintosh wake up and find me gone for all the world. He would be sure to suspect something."

Hark! his strained ear caught the sound of something like a faint ripple.

"That was a paddle, or an animal stepping into the water," he whispered, as he leaned forward and looked up and down the river.

Gliding close along the inner shore, so as to

be enfolded in the thin ribbon of shadow, he discerned the ghostly canoe and occupant!

It was moving slowly, as though carried by the current alone, and, as he looked, he saw the same spirit-like figure of a female sitting in the stern, and a second form in the prow.

"There are two of them," he thought, as he gazed breathlessly at the sight; "we did not see them both before."

Still intently watching them, he saw that the figure in the forward part of the boat was much smaller and lighter than the other.

"Mother and daughter!" was the thought that instantly flashed into the mind of Bandman, as he fairly devoured them with his eyes.

A supernatural air was attaching to this curious scene hard to shake off; but the trapper was a practical man, and he would not believe that it was not material flesh and blood he saw before him.

"If they would only move or speak!" he murmured, seeking to shake off the oppressiveness that rested upon him.

They did not speak, but a movement was made. She who sat in the stern dipped a paddle into the water, and the same soft, rippling sound came to the ear of the trapper again.

"She is a human being," he concluded, with a sigh of satisfaction. "What will she do if I hail her?"

He was on the point of calling to her more than once, but restrained himself, from a conviction that the canoe and its occupants would vanish from sight as suddenly as it did when under the scrutiny of Mackintosh and Nick Whiffles.

So he stood still, watching, listening and wondering. He was in hopes that the boat would shoot out from the shadow, where he could gain a better view of it, but it remained where it was, but floating downward, until Hugh saw that he must move with it, if he expected to keep it under surveillance any longer.

He stepped carefully back, out of view of the river, and stealthily made his way a rod or two further down-stream. In his haste, he was conscious of making a light noise, but not enough, as he believed, to disturb any one.

But when he reached the stream, and looked expectantly up upon the water, the boat was gone!

Up, down, across, everywhere he looked, but it had indeed gone, and was to be seen nowhere.

"There is something supernatural in all this!" he exclaimed, as he turned about and made his way back to the camp-fire, returning, as he had promised, within a half-hour of the time of his departure.

But no word escaped the lips of Hugh Bandman of what he had seen that night.

CHAPTER V.

KNIVES AND SKINS.

NATURALLY, the trappers, upon awakening the next morning, very freely discussed their singular experience of the preceding night.

The majority agreed that it was some Indian contrivance, although of what character, or what its purpose was, no one undertook to conjecture even.

Nick Whiffles was thoughtful and reserved. He seemed like another person, devoid of his eccentric humor and geniality of spirits. When he was appealed to, he refused to make any satisfactory answer, and appeared unwilling to hold any conversation regarding it.

Mackintosh was the only one who seemed unaffected by the occurrence. He laughed and chatted with all, and when one or two ventured to rally him upon his disappointment, he replied:

"The thing ain't ended yet; I'm bound to get at the bottom of that mystery."

Again the two canoes put out in the river, and the long paddles of the trappers swept the boat forward with the same power and grace, but they still refrained from breaking out into their usual chorus and song.

They were now within the vicinity of the Blackfoot village, and were certain of coming upon Indians in a very short time.

Mackintosh and Nick Whiffles were conversing together about "business," when their canoe turned an abrupt bend in the stream, and they saw the town they were seeking, within a stone's throw.

A clearing of several acres' extent, came down to the river, and on every other side were the dense, "continuous woods" of Oregon. Very nearly in the center of the clearing, and a hundred yards back from the stream, stood about twenty lodges, made of bark and skins, and of a character that showed they had been built with the purpose of withstanding the rigor of the winters in these latitudes.

The prow of the canoe had scarcely turned the bend, when such a babel of shouts and hallos filled the air, that the trappers stopped rowing, and Mackintosh looked to Nick Whiffles for advice.

The old hunter smiled.

"That's the way the critters say *how do you do*."

"What shall we do? Go ahead?"

"Wait a minute."

With which he rose in the canoe so as to make himself visible, and then swinging his coon-skin cap over his head, called out to them in the Blackfoot tongue, that they were friends who had come to barter with them.

Nick was recognized before he spoke, and an instant hush fell upon all, so that his words were easily understood; one of their number called back that they were ready to trade, and invited them to come ashore.

Nick explained what was said to Mackintosh, and added:

"Put me ashore, but don't any of you folks land. I know these chaps and I'm afeared you'll git in trouble."

"But, suppose they offer you violence, do you suppose we are going to sit still and permit it?"

"I'll take care of myself. Ned, stay where you are; Calamity, come with me."

As the prow of the canoe touched the land, Nick and his dog stopped ashore, the former turning around and adding a word:

"Keep your men together; don't let one of them land."

Mackintosh nodded his head to signify that he understood, and the old trapper moved away in the direction of the village.

As may be supposed, his movements were watched with the most acute interest by his friends, who were not without painful misgivings, as they saw the Blackfoot men, women and children close around him, ere he had advanced half-way across the open clearing.

"How easy they could hew him to pieces ere we could prevent it," thought Mackintosh, who was painfully excited.

But, Nick Whiffles was the picture of the coolness of self-possession. With his face out across by his huge grin, he greeted the Indians, calling several by name, with a readiness which showed, indeed, that they were old acquaintances.

Calamity was not so well pleased. When he saw the red-skins swarm about his master, he growled and showed his teeth, and one half-grown warrior, paying no attention to him, suddenly felt his teeth nip his coppery calves. With a yell of pain, the savage made a jump up in air, as though he had suddenly stepped upon something hot, and drew his tomahawk upon the dog.

"Dont!" said Nick, laying his hand upon his arm; "the pup has already been skulped a half-dozen times, and I don't think you kin gain much there; besides, the man that runs ag'in' the pup runs ag'in' me."

There was a smile upon the face of the trapper as he uttered these words, but there was also a dangerous glitter in his sharp gray eye. Several were laughing at the discomfiture of the young warrior, and he slunk away and mingled with the others.

About this time, a number of dogs became aware of the presence of another of their own species, and they came bristling upon the scene. There were a half-dozen of them, and they came growling around the stranger in a most threatening manner.

Calamity treated them all with dignified indifference, and all took the hint except one mongrel cur that would not be put off. After several warnings, he finally flew, with open mouth, at him.

Ere his own mouth could close, the massive jaws of Calamity snapped shut, with the throat of the presumptuous canine between them. When Calamity loosened them, his victim dropped as lifeless as a stick to the ground.

Nick had managed to see all this, and he remarked as he turned his head:

"Since Calamity has saluted that animal, I don't think, considerin' him as a dog, he's of much account. When you git through with 'em, Calamity, set 'em down soothin' like, just as a cat does her kitten."

The other curs did not seem particularly anxious to be "soothed" in this manner, and they took good care to give their ferocious visitor a wide berth.

Nick managed the negotiations with the skill of a Bismark. He had learned from Mackintosh what he had to offer in the way of barter, and he was not long in finding out that the Blackfeet had a most valuable lot of beaver-skins, which they were saving up in anticipation of a visit from the agents of the Northwest Fur Company, but which they were very ready to exchange with the party that would give them the best bargain.

They wanted knives, ammunition, blankets and ornaments, and these were just what the trappers had brought with them.

When informed of this they scattered to bring forth their pelts. Piles of furs and skins were fetched from the different lodges, and then carried down to the river-bank, where they were thrown into a large heap, and the owners waited for the "barter" to open.

This was speedily done, Nick still acting as negotiator. Glittering knives and gaudy trinkets were handed over to him, and he passed them to the Blackfeet, receiving their furs in return.

The negotiations progressed very satisfactorily and with considerable expedition. The Blackfeet had been in this kind of business before, and they knew very well the price that the trappers would pay for their furs; so there was little haggling to check the bartering.

The two canoes were ranged alongside the bank and the furs were passed to the men, who rapidly placed them in position.

At the end of a couple of hours the bargains were all completed. The entire pile of peltries was transferred to and distributed between the two canoes. Indian men, women and children were dancing with delight, and even the dogs seemed to share in the general exultation.

Occupied thus in frolicking over their new possessions, they did not think much of opening hostilities with the trappers. It would have been in keeping with the treacherous character of the Blackfeet to have attacked these men and robbed them of the goods they had just sold. Had they been sure of success this is just what they would have done.

But there was that in the appearance of these same Hudson Bay trappers which satisfied the red-skins that there might be a slight unpleasantness, and very possibly a disappointment in undertaking such a thing.

Understanding what was passing through the minds of these dusky scoundrels, the whites conducted themselves accordingly. Their rifles and side-arms were displayed, and possibly the men put on a fiercer expression than usual.

His work done, Nick Whiffles very quietly stepped into the boat, Calamity whisking after him. At the same instant the paddles dipped into the water, the canoes instantly made a gap between them and the shore, and then, rounding in the river, started up stream.

The Indians still danced with a "wild delight;" Nick Whiffles stood in the boat smiling and waving his hand, like a father uttering his blessing upon the heads of his frolicksome children.

The trappers rowed with their powerful stroke, and a few minutes later the Blackfoot village and its boisterous natives were shut from view.

CHAPTER VI.

"WILL YOU DO IT?"

A FEELING of relief came over the trappers as they felt that they were out of sight of the dangerous Blackfeet, and that every minute was taking them further away.

As the distance increased, the low hum of a song began to be heard among them. It rapidly grew louder, until it swelled out into the same deep, musical melody that these men have so often awakened among the mountains of the North-west. There were voices rich in music among these trappers, and scarcely any thing more charming could be imagined than to stand on a mountain several miles distant, and hear the song borne to you on the still air.

Nick Whiffles had stated to Mackintosh that the Indians were expecting the appearance of the North-west crew, so there was reason to fear that they were somewhere in the neighborhood, and a collision was possible.

Indeed, it seemed more likely than not that the two parties would meet, as the other brigade would be certain to descend the Elk in visiting the Blackfeet.

Mackintosh and his men had several days' paddling to do before they could reach a point where they could leave the Elk and thus get off the route of their rivals, who, finding that they had been outwitted, would be very apt to make some dangerous manifestations.

The air was clear and bracing, and the two large canoes continued their swift course up the river with no interruption at all, until the usual time for halting, when the moon was directly overhead.

Nick Whiffles having performed his engagement for Mackintosh, received a very liberal fee from him, and understood that he was at liberty to depart whenever he chose; but as

they were carrying him toward the lonely spot in the wilderness where his cabin stood, he preferred to remain with them through the greater part of this day, at least.

When at noon the boats turned toward the shore, they had put a good number of miles between them and the Blackfoot village, so that they gave no further thought regarding it.

As before, they were surrounded by dense woods, and several of the men, upon landing, instantly plunged into the forest in quest of game. While the others were occupied in their various duties, Mackintosh requested Bandman to walk aside with him.

The two moved silently away among the trees, until they were beyond sight and hearing of their friends, when they seated themselves upon a mound of earth, and the Scotchman first spoke.

"Hugh," said he, in a low, confidential tone, "I have rather a curious proposition to make to you."

"I am ready to hear it," replied the trapper, in a serious voice.

"To come to the point, I have come to the conclusion to unravel the mystery regarding this Phantom Princess, as she is called, and I have fixed upon you as my agent."

"Why have you selected me?"

"For several reasons. One is that I know you better than I do any of the rest, and my knowledge of you is such as to give me the fullest faith in you. I can say that, during the long service that you have given the company, there never has been the first complaint against you, and you have never yet been known to fail in anything you undertook."

Bandman bowed his head to signify that he appreciated the compliment. Indeed, there was a certain dignity in the manner of the trapper, that would have impressed one in his favor.

"All this is preliminary," continued Mackintosh. "If I were asked to select a man from my party, who was free from superstition, there is only one about whom I could feel any certainty."

"I suppose you refer to me?" said the trapper, with a smile.

"Of course; brave as Nick Whiffles undoubtedly is, it was easy to see last night that he was impressed by what he saw, and holds a superstitious feeling about the Phantom Princess. I am satisfied, in my own mind, that, curious as was the scene, the actor in it was as much flesh and blood as either you or I. What do you think?"

"I agree with you."

"I did not doubt it. Furthermore, I believe that the mystery of the Princess lies in the Blackfoot village that we visited to-day."

Bandman started so preceptibly that Mackintosh laughed.

"What is it, Hugh?"

"Rather strange," replied his friend, with the same smile, "but, somehow or other, it is the same conclusion that forced itself upon me, while we were trading with them to-day."

"Good reason for believing we are right; did you observe anything that could give you a clue?"

"Nothing at all; I was on the look-out for it at the time, but could detect nothing."

"Have you any reason then for your belief?"

"Probably no more than you have; I am satisfied that this Nick Whiffles knows more about the matter than he is disposed to tell."

"Undoubtedly; but there is no use of questioning him; his lips are sealed, and he would resent any interference."

"Well, I am ready to hear any proposal," said Bandman, after a moment's silence between them.

"My official position under the company prevents my engaging personally in any thing of this character, as you can readily see; but there are several things that have awakened my suspicion since Nick Whiffles joined us, and I have the strongest desire to probe them to the bottom. You are the man I wish should undertake to clear up the doubt about this Phantom Princess. Will you do it?"

Bandman was silent a moment, and then, looking down to the ground, he spoke as though communing with himself.

"I have a great desire to do so."

"Will you undertake it?"

"Yes."

"That settles the greatest difficulty," said Mackintosh, with something of his natural cheerfulness of manner, and then he added, in the same thoughtful tones:

"If I were talking to another person, I should name some pecuniary inducement—but not to you. You have an abundance of wealth in London, and I know no money could tempt you to engage in anything against your own desires."

"Of course," assented the trapper, with a sigh; "I have some curiosity regarding this person, and will undertake to identify her."

"It will be necessary for you to visit the Blackfoot village, and there will be no little personal danger in doing so."

"I know it," was the reply.

"To give a color of authority to your undertaking, I will make you the bearer of a message to the chief from me, asking him to catch and save all the peltries for us during the coming winter. Perhaps that will assist you through."

"It is a good suggestion," said Bandman, not a little pleased, "and with the exercise of a little tact upon my part, I think I can succeed. There is one promise, however, that I must exact of you, upon which depends my acceptance of this mission."

"It is given before you ask it."

"It is that, if I do not return to you, you will make no attempt to assist me. No matter what happens to me, you are not to interfere, but wait till I appear before you, and if I do not put in an appearance, you may know that that is an end to my history."

"I cannot recall my promise," said Mackintosh, with a sadness of manner; "but it is given with a heavy heart."

Ever since the interview began, Hugh Bandman had been debating a question with himself. It was whether he should tell Mackintosh his own personal experience of the preceding night, when he had learned that the Phantom Princess had a companion with her.

More than once he was on the point of doing so, but his natural caution intervened, and when the interview was drawing to a close, he had decided to make no reference to it at all in his presence.

"You can leave us to-morrow, or to-night, even, if you choose, without attracting notice, as the men are used to such things on your part, and then all will be left to your discretion. You need no directions from me."

"I hardly know how I shall act," continued the trapper, in that same absent way, "but I will trust in Providence, as I have always done in the past, and I am quite hopeful of coming out right."

"So am I; I shall look anxiously for your return to Fort William."

"I would prefer that you would forget all about me, and not expect me, until I appear before you."

"I would prefer to do that if it were possible, but such things are not so easily done!"

The two men talked together a few minutes longer, and then, as there was nothing of importance to add, both rose to their feet and began walking back toward the camp.

While engaged in talking, both had heard several reports of guns, from which they concluded that the hunters who had gone out in search of game were meeting with good success.

But when they emerged from the woods, they saw at once that there was some unusual excitement in the camp. The men were gathered in a group around two of the hunters, who were talking in an excited manner.

"What is it?" asked Mackintosh, as he hurried forward.

"The Nor'-westers are coming down the river, and a half-dozen of them fired at us."

"How near are they?"

"They will be in sight in five minutes!"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 295.)

Erminie:

THE GIPSY QUEEN'S VOW.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,
AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "AN AW-
FUL MYSTERY," "VICTORIA," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

OUR ERMINIE.

"A lovely being, scarcely formed or molded—
A rose with all its sweetest leaves yet folded."
—BYRON.

"WELL, I never!" exclaimed Pet.
"Why, it's Ranty!" said the surprised Erminie.

"Yes," said Ranty, giving his hat so well-aimed a kick that it struck the cat, and hurled that unfortunate quadruped over on her back, "and this is a nice way to treat a lone woman, as Miss Priscilla says—ain't it? Going and tearing the clothes off her back, without any regard for decency, or the slightest veneration for gray hairs. By the way, I must take care of that wig. It belongs to Uncle Harry, and I stole it last night when he was in bed."

"What do you think of my 'get-up,' Ray?" I laid on the brown and black unsparingly.

"Well, your complexion would be improved by having your face washed," replied Ray.

"However, it's very creditable, and shows how usefully you can employ your time when you like. Where, in the name of all the witches that were ever ducked, did you get all this trumpery?"

"Trumpery! Just listen to that, now," said Ranty, appealing to society in general. "Calling this hat, and cloak, and the rest of my drapery, trumpery. Well, most irreverent youth, I got it up in the garret among a lot of lumber and stuff, and I coaxed one of the housemaids to dress me. I flatter myself I made a showy appearance when I entered—eh? Poor Orlando Toospegs! Unhook this confounded frock, Pet."

"Well, now, to think I never knew you," said Pet, as she obeyed. "I thought it might be a trick, but I never suspected such a stupid thing as you could have done it."

"That's the way! Merit never is appreciated in this world," said Ranty, as he stepped out of his rather dilapidated garment. "I expect nobody will find out what a genius I am until it is too late. Darn the thing! I can't get it off at all."

"Patience, Ranty! patience, and smoke your pipe," said Ray, as he assisted him off with his dress, and Ranty stepped out in his proper costume, and stood there, tall, human, handsome, and as different from the old witch of a few moments before as it was possible to be.

"Oh, Ranty! what a trick!" said Erminie, laughing. "It was a shame to frighten poor Mr. Toospegs, though."

"He won't get much sympathy from Miss Priscilla, I guess," said Ranty. "I do think he believed every word of it."

"To be sure he did," said Ray; "and such an expression of utter wretchedness as his face wore when he went out, I never want to see again. It will be as good as a play to see him when he goes home, and tells Miss Priscilla."

"I'm going there to spend the day," said Pet. "Miss Priscilla can't bear me, so I go there as often as I can. I'll be able to tell you all about it when I come back."

"You had better not," said Ray. "There are two or three runaway niggers in the woods, and it's dangerous for you to go alone."

"Now, you might have known that would just make that intensely-disagreeable girl go," said Ranty, rocking himself backward and forward in Erminie's chair. "Tell her there's danger anywhere, and there she'll be sure to fly."

The other day, some one told her the typhus fever was down at the quarters, and nothing would serve her but she must instantly make her appearance there, to see what it was like. Luckily, it turned out to be something else; but if it had been the fever, Nilla would have been a case by this time—and serve her right, too. It's very distressing to a quiet, peaceable individual like myself," said Master Ranty, pensively, leaning his head on his hand with a deep sigh. "But there's no use in me exhorting her; she don't mind in the least. I've talked to her like a father; I've preached to her on the evil of her ways till all was blue; I've lectured her time and again, like a pocket-edition of Chrysostom, and look at the result! I don't expect to live out half my days 'long of that 'ere little limb, as our Dell says."

And Master Ranty sighed deeply over the degeneracy of the human race in general, and Nilla in particular.

"Spoken like an oracle," cried Ray; "but though Nilla won't take your advice, as a general thing, I hope she'll take mine."

"No, I won't," was Miss Petronilla's short, sharp and decisive reply. "I won't take you nor your advice, neither! I'm just going to Dismal Hollow, and I'd like to see who'll stop me!"

"Why, the half-starved niggers will," said Ranty; "and, what's more, they'll swallow you, body and bones, and without salt, too, which will be adding insult to injury. They'll find you sharp and arid enough, though, if that's any consolation."

"Indeed, Pet, I wouldn't go if I were you," said Erminie, anxiously.

"Well, you ain't me; so you needn't," said Pet. "But I'm going; and you may all talk till you are black in the face, and then I won't stop."

And the willful elf put on her hat, and took her whip and gloves, and looked defiantly at the assembled trio.

"Very well when you've departed this life and gone to the place all disagreeable little girls go to, don't say I didn't warn you of

your danger," said Ranty. "We'll put up a monument to your memory, with the inscription:

Sacred to the Memory
Of that sunburnt, so-called female Nimrod,
PETRONILLA LAWLESS,
Who ought to lie here, but she doesn't.
For, having lied all the time she afflicted this earth,
Now that she has departed to a worse land,
She lies in the stomach of a great big nigger,
Who swallowed her at a mouthful one night.
Of such is the Kingdom of Maryland.
"You had better let me go with you," said Ray.

"No; you sha'n't," said Pet, whose willful nature was now thoroughly aroused by opposition, and who fancied, if she accepted this offer, they might think it was cowardice; "I'll go myself. You ride with me, indeed! Why, I'd leave you out of sight in ten minutes."

"Ray's dark cheek flushed, and he turned angrily away.

"Well, be sure to come home before dark—won't you, Pet?" said Erminie, following the capricious fairy to the door.

"No, I sha'n't leave Dismal Hollow till nine o'clock," said Pet, looking back defiantly at the boys. "I'm just going to show them that if two great boys, like they are, are afraid, little Pet Lawless ain't. I'll ride through the woods after dark, in spite of all the runaway niggers this side of Baltimore."

"All right," said Ranty. "I'd rather they'd eat you, though, than me; for you're like the Starved Apothecary—all skin and bones. They'll have hard crunching of it, I'll be bound! Luckily, though, darkeys have good teeth!"

"Oh, Pet! what will you do, if the niggers should see you?" said Erminie, clasping her hands.

Pet touched her pistols significantly.

"Two years ago, Ranty taught me to shoot, you little pinch of cotton-wool! and I haven't forgotten the way for want of practice since

"Well, I'm sure!" ejaculated Mr. Toosyeps. "You really can't think what a relief it is to my feelings to hear that. Somehow, my feelings are always relieved when I'm with you, Miss Minnie. Young Mr. Lawless means real well, I'm sure, but then it kind of frightens a fellow a little. I felt, Miss Minnie," said Mr. Toosyeps, placing his hand on his left vest-pocket, "a sort of feeling that kept going in and out here, like—like anything. I felt as if I was headed up in a hoghead, all full of spikes, with the points inward, and then being rolled down-hill. You've often felt that way, I dare say, Miss Minnie?"

Minnie, a little alarmed at this terrible description, said she didn't know.

"Well, I feel better now. I'm very much obliged to you," said Mr. Toosyeps, drawing a deep breath of intense relief. "And I guess I won't mind my will this afternoon, though I shan't forget Mrs. Keturah when I'm going, if she should happen to survive me. How does she feel to-day, Miss Minnie? Excuse me for not asking before; but, really, I've been in such a state of mind all the morning that I actually couldn't tell which end I was standing on, if I may be allowed so strong a figure of speech."

"Grandmother's as well as she always is," replied Minnie. "She is able to sit up, but she can't walk, or come down-stairs. She won't let me sit with her either, and always says she wants to be alone."

"I expect her son preys on her mind a good deal," said Mr. Toosyeps, reflectively.

"He was drowned," said Erminie, in a low tone.

"Yes, I know; she was real vexed with Lord De Courcy about it, too. I dare say you have heard her talk of him."

"Yes," said Erminie, with a slight shudder; "I have heard her tell Ray how he must hate him and all his family, and do them all the harm he could. I don't like to hear such things. They don't seem right. I heard Father Murray saying, last Sunday, in church, we must forgive our enemies, or we won't be forgiven ourselves. I always used to come away, at first, when grandmother would begin to talk about hating them and being revenged; but her eyes used to blaze up like, and she would seem so angry about it, that afterward I staid. I don't like to hear it, though, and I always try not to listen, but to think of something else all the time."

"I suppose young Germaine don't mind," observed Mr. Toosyeps.

"No. Ray gets fierce, and looks so dark and dreadful that I feel afraid of him then," said Erminie, sadly. "He always says, when he is a man, he will go to England and do dreadful things to them all, because they killed his father. I don't think they killed him; do you, Mr. Toosyeps? They couldn't help his being drowned, I think."

"Well, you know, Miss Minnie," said Mr. Toosyeps, with the air of a man entering upon an abstruse subject, "if they hadn't made him go on board that ship, and he hadn't taken anything else, and died, he would have been living yet. He didn't care about going, but they insisted, so he went, and the ship struck a coral reef—wasn't that was it. The ship struck that, and all hands were lost. Now, where the fault was, I can't say, but it was somewhere, Miss Minnie. That's a clear case."

And Mr. Toosyeps leaned back in his chair with the complacent smile of a man who has explained the whole matter, to the satisfaction of the very dullest intellect.

Little Minnie looked puzzled and wistful for a moment, as if, notwithstanding all he had said, the affair was not much clearer; but she said nothing.

"You're his daughter—ain't you, Miss Minnie?" said Mr. Toosyeps, briskly, after a short pause.

"Whose, Mr. Toosyeps?" asked Minnie.

"Why, him, you know; him that was drowned."

"No, I guess not," said Erminie, thoughtfully; "Ray called me his little sister, one day, before grandmother, and she told him to hush, that I wasn't his sister. I guess I'm his cousin, or something; but I don't think I'm his sister."

"Your father and mother are dead, I reckon," said Mr. Toosyeps.

"Yes, I suppose so; but I dare say you'll laugh, Mr. Toosyeps, but it never seems so. I dream sometimes of the strangest things. And Erminie's soft violet eyes grew misty and dreamy as she spoke, as though gazing on something afar off."

"Good gracious! what do you dream, Miss Minnie? I'm sure I haven't the least notion of laughing at all. I feel as serious as anything," said Mr. Toosyeps, in all sincerity.

But Erminie, child as she was, shrunk from telling any one of the sweet, beautiful face of the lady who came to her so often in her dreams; and so, blushing slightly, she bent over her work in silence.

"Doesn't young Germaine know who your father and mother were?" asked Mr. Toosyeps, after a while, seeing Erminie was not going to tell him about her dreams.

"No, Ray doesn't know, either. Grandmother won't tell, but he thinks I'm his cousin; I guess I am, too," said Erminie, adopting the belief with the careless confidence of childhood.

"Well, you were born in England, anyway," said Mr. Toosyeps, "for you were only a little baby, the size of that, when you left it," holding his hand about an inch and a half above the floor. "Most likely you're a gipsy, though—she's a gipsy, you know," added Mr. Toosyeps, in a mysterious whisper, pointing to the ceiling.

"Yes, I know," said Erminie, with an intelligent nod; "I heard her tell Ray so; she used to tell him a good many things, but she never tells me anything. I guess she thinks I don't love her, but I do. Did you ever see that Lord De Courcy?"

"No; but I saw his son, Lord Villiers, and his wife, Lady Maude. My gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Toosyeps, with an unexpected outburst of enthusiasm, "she was the handsomest woman in the world! I can't begin to tell you how good-looking she was! If all the handsome women ever you saw were melted into one, they wouldn't be near so good-looking as Lady Maude!"

"How I should like to see her!" said little Erminie, laying down her work with a wistful sigh. "Tell me about her, Mr. Toosyeps."

"Well, she had long black curls, not like Miss Pet's, you know, but long and soft; and the most splendid black eyes—go right straight through a fellow, easy! She was pale and sweet; I always used to think of white cream-candy whenever I saw her, Miss Minnie; and then her smile, it was just like an angel's—not that I ever saw an angel, Miss Minnie," said Mr. Toosyeps, qualifying his admission, reluctantly, "but they must have looked like her."

Erminie had listened to this description with clasped hands, flushed cheeks, parted

lips, and ailing eyes. As Mr. Toosyeps paused, she impetuously exclaimed:

"Oh, Mr. Toosyeps, I've seen her! I've seen her often!"

"Good gracious!" said the astonished Mr. Toosyeps, "I can't see where; I guess you only think so, Miss Minnie."

"Oh, no, I don't; indeed I don't; I know I have seen her. That lovely lady with the beautiful smile, and soft black eyes. Oh, I know; I've seen her, Mr. Toosyeps."

"Land of hope! where, Miss Minnie?"

But Minnie had recovered from her sudden joy and surprise at hearing of the resemblance between this beautiful lady and the lovely vision of her dreams, and pausing now, she blushed, and said:

"Please don't ask me, Mr. Toosyeps; you would think me silly, I guess. I must go and help Lucy to get dinner now. You'll stay for dinner—won't you, Mr. Toosyeps?"

"Thank you, Miss Minnie," said the gratified Mr. Toosyeps, "I certainly will, with a great deal of pleasure; I'm very much obliged to you."

CHAPTER XVIII. PET'S PERIL.

"Who can express the horror of that night. When darkness lent his robes to monster fear? And heaven's black mantle, banishing the light, Made everything in ugly form appear."

MISS PETRONILLA LAWLESS having, as Ranty would have expressed it, got the steam up to a high pressure, thundered over the heath, entered the forest road, and looked with eyes sparkling with defiance at the dark, gloomy pine woods on either hand. The bright morning sunshine, falling in a radiant shower through the waving boughs of the pines, gilded the crimson glow on her thin cheeks and lips, and brought fiery circles of flame through all her short, crisp, jetty curls. Darkly beautiful looked the little willful elf, as she slackened her pace through the narrow, sylvan forest path, as if to give any hidden enemy, if such lurked there, a full opportunity of making his appearance. None came, however; and twenty minutes brought her in sight of the gloomy gorge in the cleft mountain, so appropriately named Dismal Hollow.

Pet slackened the mad pace at which she had started still more, and loosening her bridle-reins, allowed her sure-footed pony, Starlight, to choose his own way down the narrow, unsafe bridle-path.

As she approached the house, she ran her eye, with a critical look, over it, and muttering, "Miss Priscilla's been making improvements," prepared to alight.

A great change for the better, too, had taken place in the appearance of Dismal Hollow, since the advent of Miss Priscilla. The great pools of green slimy water were no longer to be seen before the door; the receptacles for mud and filth had vanished, as if by magic. A clean, dry platform spread out where these had once been; the windows were no longer stuffed full of rags and old hats, but with glass panes, that fairly glittered with cleanliness; broken fences were put up, out-houses were repaired, and the whole house had evidently undergone a severe course of regeneration.

Inside, the improvements were still more remarkable. Every room had undergone a vigorous course of scrubbing, washing, papering, and plastering, and the doors and windows had been closed, and hermetically sealed, and no sacrilegious foot was ever permitted to enter and "muss up," as Miss Priscilla expressed it, those cherished apartments wherein her soul delighted. The only rooms in the old house which she permitted to be profaned by use were a couple of sleeping apartments, a little sitting-room, and the kitchen. The servants, for so long a time accustomed to do as they liked, and lazy about as they pleased, were struck with dismay at Miss Priscilla's appalling vigor and neatness. That worthy lady declared it was not only a shame, but a sin, to be eaten out of house and home by a parcel of "shiftless niggers;" and one of her very first acts was to hire half of them out to any one who would employ them.

The remainder were then informed, in very short terms, that if they did not mind their P's and Q's, they'd be "sold to George"—a threat sufficient to terrify them into neatness and order sufficient even to satisfy "Miss Silly," as they called her.

On this particular morning, Miss Priscilla sat up in her sitting-room—a little, stiff, square, prim, upright and downright sort of apartment, with no foolery in the shape of little feminine nicknacks or ornaments about it, but everything as distressingly clean as it was possible to be. Miss Priscilla herself, radiant in a scanty, fady calico gown, reaching to her ankles, a skimpy black silk apron, and a stiff, solemn, grim-looking mob cap, was ensconced in a rocking-chair, that kept up an awful "screaky-scrawchy," as she rocked backward and forward, knitting away as if her life depended on it. Very hard, and grim, and sour looked Miss Priscilla, as she sat there with her sharp, cankerous lips so tightly shut that they reminded one of a vise, and her long, bony nose running out everlastingly into the thin regions of space.

The sharp clatter of her horse's hoofs arrested her attention, and she turned and looked sharply out of the window. The sour scowl deepened on her vinegar phiz, as she perceived Pet in the act of alighting.

"That sharp little wiper of a Lawless girl," muttered Miss Priscilla, "coming here, with a appetite that's awful to contemplate, when she's not wanted; turning everything topsy-turvy, not to speak of that her pigeon-pie what's for dinner being honily enough for one. Wah! wah!"

And with a look that seemed the very essence of distilled vengeance, and everything else sour, sharp and cankerous, Miss Priscilla went to the head of the stairs, and called:

"Kuppy! Kuppy!" (her abbreviation of Cupid), "go and hopen the door for that Lawless girl, which is come, and bring her pony hinto the barn, and show her hup 'ere; hand don't mind a-givin' hof her hany boats. Be quick there!"

As Miss Priscilla, who looked with contempt upon bells as a useless superfluity, had a remarkably shrill, ear-splitting voice of her own, the order to be quick seemed quite unnecessary; for Cupid, clapping his hand over his bruised and wounded ear-drums, hastened to the door as rapidly as possible, in order to get rid of the noise. Then Miss Priscilla walked back to her chair, and deposited her bony form therein—determining, with a sort of sour grimness, to make the best of a bad bargain. Not that Miss Priscilla thought anything of the courtesies of hospitality. She was above such weakness. But Pet Lawless was the daughter of one of the richest and most influential men in the State—would be great heiress and fine lady some day; and Miss Priscilla, being only flesh and blood, like the rest of us, could not help feeling a deep veneration for wealth. Personally, she disliked our mad little whirligig more than anybody else she knew. But money, like charity, covereth a multitude

of sins; and as Miss Pet would inherit half a million some day, Miss Priscilla Toosyeps, looking into the womb of futurity, was disposed to forgive her now the awful crime of "mussing up" her immaculate rooms, in the hope of a substantial return when the little madcap entered upon her fortune.

Pet, having by this time alighted, ran up the steps, and, with the end of her riding-whip, knocked so vociferously that she awoke every slumbering echo in the quiet old house.

Cupid, half-deafened between the piercing voice of Miss Priscilla within, and the vigorous clamor without, threw open the door; and Pet, with her riding-habit gathered up in one hand, and flourishing her whip in the other, stood there, bright, and sparkling, and fresh as a mountain-daisy before him.

"Well, Cupe, how are you these times? Eh? Miss Priscilla at home?"

"Yes, Miss Pet. Miss Silly tole me to tell you you was to walk right up," said Cupid.

"Very well. Take Starlight, and give him a good rubbing, and then plenty of oats and water. He's had a hard gallop of it this morning—poor fellow!" said Pet, as she passed Cupid, and ran up-stairs. "Now to face the old dragon!" she muttered, as, puckering up her rosy mouth in a fruitless attempt to whistle, she swaggered into the presence of the dread spinster, with her usual springing, jaunty air.

"She hates me, and she hates kisses," said Pet, mentally; "so I'll kiss her, if I die in the attempt! But, ugh! vengeance! veridigrits! vitriol, and vinegar! I'd as lief swallow a dose of sourkrot, and have done with it. It's going to be awful, I know; but I'll do it!"

"Morning, Miss Pet," said Miss Priscilla, looking grimly up.

"Oh, Miss Priscilla, how do you do! Oh, Miss Priscilla! I'm so glad to see you again!"

And before Miss Priscilla dreamed of her diabolical intention, the elf had sprung forward, clutched her by the throat, and clung to her like a clawfish, while half a dozen short, sharp kisses went off like so many pop-guns on the withered cheek of the luckless old maid.

With no gentle hand, Miss Priscilla caught the monkey by the shoulder, and hurled her from her with a violence that sent her spinning like a top across the room.

"It's all very well for people to be glad to see people, which is honily 'uman nature,'" began Miss Priscilla, in a high, shrill falsetto, while she adjusted her dislocated mob-cap; "but that haint no reason why people must 'ave the clothes tore hof their back by people, just because they're glad to see them— which is something I never was used to Miss Pet; and though hit may be the fashion him this 'ere country, hit's something I don't approve of 'at all, Miss Pet. Now, you'll excuse me for saying I would rather you wouldn't do so no more—which is disagreeable to the feelings, not to speak of mussing up people's caps, as is some bother to hiron; though you mayn't think so, Miss Pet."

And having delivered herself of this brilliant and highly-grammatical oration, and thereby relieved her mind, Miss Priscilla picked up a stitch in her knitting, which, in the excitement of the moment, she had dropped.

"Why, Miss Priscilla, I'm sorry; I'm sure I didn't mean to make you mad," said Pet, in a penitent tone. "But I was so glad to see you, you know, I couldn't help it. Where's Orlando?"

"Hat them there Barrens, which is the desolatest place I ever seen," said Miss Priscilla; "hall weeds; and there you'll find him, with nothing growing but nasty grass, his halong hof that there hold gipsy woman and little gal, 'stead hof staying at 'ome, hand 'tending to his 'airs, as a respectable member hof 'society hought for to do; heaving away his money, with me slavin' hand tolin' from week's head to week's head, smoking hof nasty cigars, as spiles the teeth hand undermines the hinfellocks; which was something his blessed father (now a hangel hup there in the graveyard) never did; and shows 'ow youth is a degenerate! Wah! wah!" said Miss Priscilla, concluding with her usual grimace of sour disgust.

"Just so, Miss Priscilla, I've often had to talk to our Ranty about it, too," said Pet, gravely; "but these boys are all a nasty set, you know, and don't mind us girls at all. I've come to stay all day, Miss Priscilla." And Pet took off her hat and gloves as she spoke. "I thought you might be lonesome, and knew you'd be glad to have me here; and I don't really know of any place I like to be so well as I do to be here!"

All the time Pet had been uttering this awful flattery, she was taking off her things, and pitching them about in a way that made Miss Priscilla gasp with horror. Her hat was thrown into one corner, her gloves into another, her whip into a third, and her pocket-handkerchief, collar and brooch anywhere they chose to fall.

"You needn't go putting yourself out about dinner, Miss Priscilla," said Pet, who well knew the spinster's parsimoniousness in this respect, and thought she would just give her a hint. "Anything will do for me—a broiled chicken, with a mince pie and some grapes; or some nice mutton chops, fried in butter, with a rice-pudding, or a custard—anything, you know. But don't put yourself out!"

"I don't hint to do," said Miss Priscilla, knitting away, grimly. "I never do put myself hout for hanybody; wouldn't for the President hof the United States or the King hof Hingland—no, not hif he was to come hall the way from Lunnion hon his two blessed bare knees to hask hif hof me has a favor. Hand hif you'd pick up them there clothes of your'n, Miss Pet, which his hall pitched about, hand gives the room a hundert look, and put them hon the table, hand call to Haint Bob to herry them hup-stairs, I'd feel heasier him my mind."

"Oh, let them lay!" said Pet, indifferently. "They're old things; and I ain't particular about 'em. I guess the room won't dirty them much!"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 290.)

Idaho Tom,

THE YOUNG OUTLAW OF SILVERLAND!

BY OLL COOMES.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LELAND EXPLAINS.

SHORTLY after our friends had reached the island, a general attack was made by the Indians upon the place, but they were repulsed with heavy loss; and, withdrawing from the bay, they attempted no further demonstrations.

Joy reigned supreme during the remainder of the night. The father and child were happy over their reunion, and the Boy Hunters and the Mad Trapper in recounting the adventures of the night.

By day-dawn every savage had withdrawn from sight, though no one believed they had

retired entirely from the lake, and their conquest.

The sun was up long hours before it looked over the mountain-top, and lifted the dense fog from the bosom of the bay; but, finally, it burst forth in all its splendor, and rolled back the veil of ethereal lacework from the brow of the great mountain and the bosom of the water.

The islanders and their new friends breakfasted early, after which an hour or so was consumed in demonstrating the wonderful powers of the battery concealed in the skiff, each one of the Boy Hunters, including Idaho Tom, testing the machine to their satisfaction. Hubert Leland appeared to be highly pleased with the honor of explaining the workings, wonders and philosophy of the electric battery to the boys, although Frank Caselton and Perry Bassett knew much about the instruments, before.

Leland finally called the Boy Hunters around him, and having requested them to be seated, he said:

"Boys, the past night has been a momentous one to all of us; and to you am I indebted for my existence now, also that of my daughter and friends."

"Mr. Leland," said Frank Caselton, "I am sure you owe us nothing, since it was our Christian duty to help you in your hour of need and distress, as you and your daughter did for me."

"Yes; that is the true meaning of man's duty to his fellow-beings, when the right construction is put upon it. But there is another matter of which I wish to speak to you; and it is this: I know you are all somewhat puzzled over our occupation here upon this island, and I don't know that I could find fault with you for it. But when you leave here, I want it to be with the assurance that you have not been fighting in defense of men of a doubtful character. Therefore, it is my purpose to tell you, and tell you honestly, too, exactly what we are driving at, upon this floating island and upon this bay."

"In the first place, I will go back several years and begin at the beginning, in order to be explicit. In the year eighteen hundred and fifty, a party of six men, of whom one was a brother of mine, became affected with the California gold fever, and, fixing up, they struck out for the Pacific slope. From that time up to within the past year, not one of that little party was ever heard from. We all supposed they had been killed, or died, or had become so isolated that they cared nothing about those they had left behind, and so neglected to write. But, last summer, Zedekiah Dee, while hunting in the east foothills of the Rocky Mountains, found in a cavern a human skeleton. By its side was a rifle, pistol and knife; also a silver tobacco-box. In this box was a paper giving a brief history of the adventures and death of five of these miners, the sixth one being the writer himself. This latter person was my brother. The paper stated that they had reached the land of gold in safety, and after three years of hard work, had all accumulated independent fortunes, with which they set out for their homes. As there were no public conveyances in those days to which they could intrust the carriage of their treasure, they procured pack-animals for the purpose."

"By this time the main route by way of the South Pass, as well as that by Santa Fe, had become infested with robbers who made a business of preying on homeward-bound gold-seekers; and so our friends concluded to travel a route of their own selection. But, somehow or other, the outlaws or robbers got wind of their departure and followed them up. The robbers came upon them a day or two after they started, when a sharp fight ensued. One of the miners was killed, but the robbers were defeated; but being reinforced, kept up the pursuit day and night. Our friends' pack-animals finally gave out near this lake, and in order to save their lives, the miners were compelled to abandon their gold. That it might not fall into the robbers' hands, and in hopes of being able to recover it again some day, they sunk their treasure in different parts of this bay after night, then hurried on. But now new dangers and privations beset their path, and one by one they died of hunger or were shot down by unseen savage foes, until all but my brother were dead. He succeeded in getting through the mountain, only to die in a lonely cavern after the worst of the journey was over with. But, as I said before, he left a history of the unfortunate band in his tobacco-box, with a written request that it be forwarded to me with the contents. Fortunately, it fell into Zedekiah Dee's hands, and the honest old trapper came hundreds of miles to deliver over the last request of my dead kindred. Well, I hunted out all the friends of the unfortunate miners, and suggested to them that we go West and search the lake of Tahoe, or Silver Bay, rather, for the sunken treasure. In this they readily acquiesced. We knew, however, that it would be a difficult task, for the deposits of years had been accumulating in the bay, and sands shifting about, until it might be ten feet beneath the bottom of the bay."

"The first thing we did was to send a party out to examine into, and report on the condition of the bay, and the surrounding country in general. The report being favorable, we began preparations for coming west. We prepared for a long stay, and every contingency for our safety. The company being soon fitted out, teams were sent on through with our outfit. When we arrived here, we found this floating island upon the bay, with everything growing upon it as you now see, unless it was a few flowers since planted by Zoe. Who built the island, I cannot tell. It must have been done years and years ago. But I do know, however, that it has been a splendid thing for our purpose. When we came here, we thought it best to employ some experienced borderman, and so we succeeded in obtaining friend Dee, there. He has served us faithfully and nobly. We kept him stationed on shore to watch out for approaching danger and suspicious characters; and whenever any were discovered, it was communicated to us so that we could suspend operations and conceal our real object. We were afraid if it got to be generally known what we were after here, we would have trouble with adventurers. To facilitate matters between shore and island, a telegraph line was established between here and the trapper's cabin, with two branch offices along the shore, concealed among the rocks and hills. In order to operate this line of communication it became necessary to keep one man ashore with friend Dee, but under the teachings of that man and Zoe, the trapper proved an apt scholar and soon learned to operate the battery, send and receive messages himself. This gave us another man aboard the island. The telegraph has no doubt been our sole salvation, although we have suffered the loss, by death, of two of our companions since we came here. They were the men, Tom, that won the ring from you at the 'Ophir Exchange.'"

Idaho Tom grew red in the face, and for a moment remained speechless.

"The trapper," he finally remarked, "was telling me about them, also the history of that ring, Mr. Leland," and the youth went on and related what we have already heard pass between him and the old trapper.

"Father," exclaimed Zoe, when he had concluded the story, "I know this to be true, for Molock admitted to me that he was the old man that rode in the coach with us, and passed himself as a detective. He said that when you called for my jewels, I put them in his outstretched hand, instead of yours."

"And, friends," added Frank Caselton, "I will further corroborate the statements of Idaho Tom and Miss Leland, by saying that I found all the rest of those jewels, except the ring, in the possession of old Molock. They are cached now over on the northern shore of the lake, and as soon as I can get ashore in safety, they shall be restored to their owner."

"These stories, then, Tom," resumed Hubert Leland, "exonerate you from all suspicion of complicity in the stage robbery that memorable night we journeyed through Purgatory Pass. But to resume the main thread of my story: for over two months we have been searching for the sunken treasure of our ill-fated friends. Supplied with two sets of diving-armors, two men are enabled to work at the same time. They descend in the clear water, and with a small iron rod, test everything on the bottom of the bay that has shape, as they walk around. When the territory within reach of the island has been thoroughly searched over, we move our anchorage and let the island shift into a new position."

"Hal! hal! ha!" laughed Frank Caselton; "that does away with, and completely explodes your theory of men dwelling under the waves, Master Wild Dick."

"Wal, I lowed it would turn out this way—that this island had some connection with the hull thing," the young hunter replied.

The boys enjoyed a good, hearty laugh at Dick's expense; after which Leland resumed:

"We operate our work from that large tent yonder. From the inside we descend into the water through a hole cut through the island. I attend to lowering and raising them, and working the apparatus that supplies them with fresh air. So now, boys, you know the whole mystery of the floating island. I have only to add, that, aside from the death of our two friends, our labor has been well rewarded. We have found much of the sunken treasure, and hope within the next week to close our work here. Then the floating island will be deserted to whoever may desire to take possession of it. But now, boys, that I have trusted you with our secret, I want to ask one more favor of you."

"Name it! name it!" shouted the boys.

"It is that you keep this a secret until we get away from this lake?"

Every boy seemed to vie with the others in being first to promise the old man that upon his word and honor he would never reveal the secret intrusted to him.

And they kept their promise sacred.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE END OF THE COMBAT.

THE Boy Hunters, including Idaho Tom, spent most of the day upon the floating island; but, as the sun began to decline westward, the young Outlaw of Silverland expressed his determination of taking his departure for Virginia City soon. The others had been prevailed upon to remain through another night upon the island, as Zedekiah Dee expressed a fear that the Indians would renew the attack as soon as night fell. But Tom could not be induced to stay. He seemed uneasy and restless about something or other, and kept walking impatiently about the island, as if he desired to say something that he could not get shaped into the proper language.

Finally the youth noticed that Frank Caselton and Zoe were absent from the main party, and in walking about discovered them standing together under the shadows of a manzanita, at the northern end of the island.

Turning, he walked to where they were, and in a kind, polite tone, tinged with sadness, said: "Pardon my intrusion, my young friends. I come to bid you good-by. I could not leave without."

"Then you are determined to leave us, are you, Tom?" Zoe said, her heart touched deeply with pity for the handsome boy.

"Yes; I can be of no further service to you folks, Zoe," he replied. "I have spent many pleasant, for all they were exciting, days around the shores of Tahoe. It is needless for me to say why they have been pleasant, for both of you know. I am willing, however, to submit to my destiny, painful though it may be. Zoe could not love but one, and she has the divine right to that choice. It was no motive of her own that determined the scale of her affection should turn, and so, Frank, I congratulate you upon your success. It needs no words to tell me that you have won the heart of Zoe Leland. And, Zoe, I believe he is fully worthy of your love. You both have my best wishes as to the future. You both are deserving of a happy life. May God bless you both and sanctify your love. Farewell, Zoe—farewell, Frank."

He shook hands with each, then turning walked away to where Zedekiah Dee was waiting in a canoe to take him ashore.

Entering the canoe the trapper sent the craft out into the bay.

Tom rose to his feet and waving a last adieu to those upon the island, turned his face toward the shore and seated himself.

In a few minutes they reached the northern beach. Tom sprang out, and turning grasped the hand of the trapper, who stood erect in the prow of the canoe, and said, in a serious tone:

"Zedekiah, I have lost."

"Lost what, Tom?"

"Zoe's love."

"Indeed, Tom?"

"Yes; she loves Frank."

"Well, it's a big loss, Tom; for she is a cherubim if ever there was war on earth. But, you will soon forget your loss, my boy. Your heart will outgrow its wound. This I know from experience. Old Zedekiah Dee loved once—when he was a boy; but he lost. His heart healed over. You have youth and health, and a prospect of a long life before you. And now, Tom, take my advice; you stand this very moment upon the edge of a terrible abyss—an abyss of moral destruction. You are naturally a little wild, and are now disappointed. I know it wouldn't take much to push you over the precipice to your ruin. Take my advice, and live a temperate, honest life. Try and improve always for the better and you will reap your reward in the end."

"I will do so, friend trapper, God willing. So good-by, Zed."

He cast a longing farewell glance toward the island, then turned and strode away, whistling a lively air to himself to keep down the emotions struggling upward in his heart.

THE END.

NIGHT.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Softly and bright the tender light
Is sprinkled from your moon so pearly,
And everything is calm and still—
You see my wife retired early.

Each pulsing star in space afar
Keeps vigil like some sentinel warden
Upon the skyey battlements—
I think the cows are in the garden.

The hand of night, so soft and light,
Is laid on many a brow of sorrow,
And they are quiet under sleep—
But where's my kindlings for to-morrow?

The night air moves about the grove,
And each leaf whispers to the other;
How sweet to sit and watch the scene—
Rather than go to bed and smother.

The flowers close in sweet repose
As meek and pale as nuns in cloisters,
Their parting breath is on the air—
I think I'd rather like some oysters.

Fit hour to muse while fall the dews
With crystal drops the leaves adorning;
I sit here thinking of the blessed—
And of some bills due in the morning.

The past life brings its tender things,
I feel the spells that once have bound me.
Old memories come on evening's breath—
Musketoes also buzz around me.

Night's indolence steals o'er my sense;
No more I feel the world's abuses;
I say "adieu!" to care and pain—
Look round for thieves, and sink to snoozes.

Nothing but a Baby.

BY MATTIE DYER BRITTS.

DOWN the broad aisle, heavy with the scent of tuberose and orange blossoms from the decorations of the room, the wedding party passed, the bright sunbeams falling over the slight form of the lovely little bride, investing her with a golden glory, a bright bow, as it were, containing the promise of future happiness.

"Well! it's done at last!" said a lady, as the crowd rose and drew its breath again.

"Yes! And if Harry Holmes doesn't wish it was undone before he's a year older I miss my guess!" said a gentleman behind her.

"Oh, but why?" asked the lady. "She's so pretty."

"Yes, and there it is! She is pretty—a pretty baby, nothing more, brought up like a doll. What does she know of the realities of everyday, practical life?"

"Not much, it's true. But she may be made of the true woman-stuff, after all, and come out grandly."

"We'll see," sagely remarked the gentleman.

And not only these, but others, made like comments on the wedding of Harry Holmes and pretty Winnie Carter.

"I'm afraid Harry's put his foot in it," observed Fred Ransom, Harry's intimate friend. "He's married a fashionable doll-baby, and I'm afraid she won't stand wear when the rubs come."

"Why, I'd marry myself if the girls were worth a snap now-days. But as it is, by George, I won't risk it!"

Well, Winnie and Harry went on their bridal trip, came back, and settled to boarding at one of the great hotels. They were as happy as could be, but even into Harry's mind there sometimes crept misgivings as to how Winnie would stand the changes they must make.

For he was only a book-keeper on an eighteen hundred salary, and he knew well that fluctuating as the times were, even that was by no means secure. Boarding at a hotel would soon exhaust that, so Harry with some reluctance proposed that they take a small house and go to housekeeping.

To his delight Winnie readily consented to do this, and even seemed pleased at the idea. The house was found and furnished as well as Harry could possibly afford, a girl was hired and to housekeeping they went.

Winnie proved to be a very tidy housekeeper, and Harry was highly pleased that the hired girl was such a good cook. He did not know that Winnie's most diligent study when he was gone was the *cook-book*, and that nearly all the nice dishes he liked so well were her work.

He began at first to give her a certain sum weekly for the housekeeping expenses, adding an extra for the washing and ironing which were given to a stout colored woman.

He charged Winnie never to go into debt for anything, but if she needed more money to come to him. She very rarely did so, however, and things moved along very smoothly. But as the winter closed in, times began to look bad. The house he was connected with became involved, and Harry felt his place to be very uncertain.

He told Winnie of this and urged her to be as economical as she could, which she promised.

"I did intend to get a new black silk," said she; "I have nearly money enough, but I can do without it this winter, so that will be one saving."

"That's a pet," said Harry, seating her on his knee, "and I'll give you the new overcoat, so that will save fifty or sixty more. I wish we could lay by something for a pinch, but I don't hardly see how we can."

"How much, now?" questioned Winnie, making marks on Harry's forehead with her little lead-pencil, "do you spend for cigars, and a ride or a glass of beer now and then?"

"Oh—well—I don't know—not half as much as I did before we were married. A fellow must have a little recreation now and then, Winnie, darling."

"Yes—I suppose so—" cooed Winnie, softly and slowly. "Well, Harry, I'll do the best I can, but—do you know, dear, I think I shall have to ask you to increase my housekeeping allowance a little, can you?"

"I suppose I can if it is necessary, but don't be extravagant, little woman," said Harry in a little surprise.

"I won't be; but I really need four or five dollars a week more if you can let me have it."

Harry promised, but secretly he felt a little worried. "She doesn't know any better, poor child," he said to himself. "She is nothing but a baby to be loved and petted anyhow, and I oughtn't to expect too much of her. She shall have anything she wants as long as I can give it to her."

Not long after Harry came home and found Winnie busily engaged in beading a beautiful black gros-grain polonaise, after a very intricate pattern.

"Pretty, isn't it?" she said as he stooped to look at it, thinking that after all the black silk had not been given up.

"Very pretty," replied Harry; "but, Winnie, I thought—aren't these things rather costly?"

"Yes, rather," said Winnie. "I suppose, now, Sharp's would charge forty dollars for beading this all over this way. And the silk was two-and-a-half a yard."

"I hope you didn't make a bill?" said Harry in sudden fear.

"Oh, no, no! It's every cent paid for, Harry," said Mrs. Winnie, and if Harry had not been too worried to notice he might have seen a comical little smile around the corners of Winnie's pretty mouth.

It took Winnie a long time to bead the black silk, but it was done at last. It had not been worn, however, when one cold March evening, Harry came home pale and dejected and flung himself into a chair.

"Why, Harry, what has happened?" asked Winnie anxiously.

"Just what I've been expecting!" said Harry, bitterly. "Our house has given up and sold out to avoid failure, and the first thing brings its own man, so we are all thrown out!"

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" said Winnie.

"So am I," returned Harry, gloomily. "It wouldn't be so bad if we had means to live on till I could get another place. But I drew every cent of my quarter's salary before I knew this to pay the last bill for our furniture. Heaven knows what we will do! I don't mind for myself, but for you, Winnie."

Winnie came over and sat down on her favorite seat, Harry's knee.

"And what would you do for a good fairy who would send us the means to live on till you got a situation?" she questioned.

"I don't know. I should be very grateful, I'm sure; but no good fairy is likely to appear, Winnie, pet. What are you getting down for?"

"I want to go up stairs after a clean apron," said Winnie, demurely.

She left the room, and Harry, looking after her bright face, said wearily to himself, "Poor baby! she does not realize what straits we may soon come to." He bowed his head on his hands and did not raise it until Winnie came in again.

She had on the clean apron, a cunning little white thing, with wonderful ruffles and pockets, and she had her little hands in both the pockets, out of sight.

"I've got something pretty for you," she said, gayly. "Two pretty things, in fact! which will you have first?"

"Whichever you please," said poor Harry, making a wretched attempt to smile.

"No, no! you must choose, sir!" with a shake of her pretty head.

"This one, then."

Winnie withdrew the hand to which he pointed, and laid in his palm a little purple velvet pocket-book which Harry recognized as one of her wedding presents.

"Winnie! what is this?" he asked, in surprise.

"Open and see," said Mrs. Winnie.

Harry opened the purse and out tumbled a roll of bills. He glanced over it. One, two, three hundred dollars, all in five dollar bills!

As he looked up into Winnie's face for an explanation, she withdrew her other hand from her apron pocket, and let fall into Harry's lap her little every-day purse. Without a word Harry opened that, too.

Four crisp twenty dollar notes, a new hundred dollar bill, and another roll of smaller bills—in all, five hundred.

"Winnie Holmes! where did you get all this?" asked Harry.

"Winnie dropped on the floor and leaned against the arm of his chair, with her face against his shoulder, and then said, "Honestly, Harry, every cent! Do you remember when I asked you to increase my housekeeping allowance?"

"Yes, I remember."

"Well, dear, I laid that extra five dollars away every single week for just such a time as this. And every week the washing and ironing money went there too."

"Then who did the washing?"

"Mary has done that, and she and I together have done the ironing for a long time. And then, Harry, you remember the black silk I was making?"

"Yes, dear."

"Well, Harry, it wasn't for myself, it was for Mrs. General Montgomery and she paid me twenty-five dollars for beading it. Then I did another for her sister and got twenty more for that. And then—Harry—"

"Well, Winnie?"

"There was my little gold watch; I didn't need it, you know, and I didn't want it, and so I sold it to Mrs. Judge Case for a hundred and fifty dollars. You won't scold, Harry?"

"Scold! You darling little thing! You good fairy, sure enough! Come here!" And Harry caught up his little wife, and drew her into his strong arms to cover her with kisses and blessings.

Next morning Harry and Fred Ransom met in the street.

"Well, Hal, old fellow! This is rough on us, isn't it?" was Fred's greeting.

"Rather rough," returned Harry.

"Now it isn't so hard on me, you see, for I've only myself to care for, but there's that little kitten of yours at home—I say, Hal, what are you going to do?"

"Well, just now I'm going down to put eight hundred dollars in bank, and I think that will last us until I get a new situation."

"Eight hundred! Why you told me only yesterday you hadn't a dollar ahead!"

"I didn't know I had, Fred; that little kitten of mine, as you call her, has worked and saved at home for me, until last night she put all that money into my hands."

Fred gave a long whistle. "She did! By George she's a plucky little soul after all! When you were married; Hal, I said she was nothing but a doll-baby—I take it all back, now, and I'd give the world, if I owned it, for another doll just like her!"

The Twelfth Juror.

BY HENRI MONTGOMERY.

It was just coming dusk, a half-hour after the train had started west from the Mississippi river. Four of us, perfect strangers the day before, but now on terms of easy familiarity, sat in two opposite seats of a Pullman car, waiting for the berths to be made up, and quite naturally we had fallen into a discussion of the great trial that just now was upon everybody's lips.

"Speaking of a jury's disagreeing," quietly put in an elderly gentleman, who had as yet said very little, "I myself was once the cause of such an occurrence, and I can't say that I have ever regretted it, since it saved not only the life of the prisoner, whom I believed to be an innocent man, but also my own life."

"Why, how was that?" we all asked, at once interested.

"Well, it is really quite a story," he replied, "and if you care to listen, I'll go through it once more. It is some time since I've told it."

"It was something like thirty-years ago," he resumed, after a short pause (and I will give the story as he told it, merely omitting the various questions and exclamations with which we from time to time interrupted him),

"indeed, very shortly after I became of age, that I was chosen jurymen in my native county of M—x, in the State of Massachusetts. As it was my first experience of the kind, I did not try to escape the duty, as older men are quite apt to do."

"The only important case that came before us was the trial of a young man for the murder of his own father. I won't go into the particulars any more than is necessary for the story. The crime was a most horrible and unnatural one, and to look upon the frank, boyish face of the prisoner, and believe him capable of it, seemed impossible. The evidence was entirely circumstantial, yet gradually as his terrible weight accumulated, an abundant motive was found in the son's desire to inherit at once the father's immense wealth, as it was shown that they had recently quarreled, that hot words had been given and returned, that the young man had publicly threatened his father's life—one by one the jurymen by my side lost faith in the prisoner, and finally when it was clearly proven that he was within five rods of the murdered man almost immediately after the fatal shot was heard, that he had an empty pistol in his hand, that the ball taken from the wound evidently belonged to this pistol, and that he acted most strangely and unlike an innocent man when found at this time, there was only one man on the jury who had not already made up his mind to the terrible verdict of 'guilty.' That man was myself. Somehow or other, gentlemen, I could not believe that the man before me was guilty of the crime charged."

"At the last moment, after the judge had charged the jury, the prisoner started up and asked if he might say a word for himself. Upon permission being given, he spoke up, in a manly fashion, as follows:

"Gentlemen of the jury, his honor has just charged you to find your verdict entirely upon the evidence. If you do, you will convict me and add one more to the long list of unfortunate ones who have been the victims of circumstantial evidence. But I charge you, here in the presence of God and man, to find a verdict according to your own belief, and maybe some one among you believes me at this moment when I say that, as God hears me, I am an innocent man!"

"It was an unusual speech to make at such a time—one which perhaps should not have been permitted. It made quite a sensation in court, and as the prisoner sat down his fearless eye caught mine for an instant, and I felt, and he felt, that I was the man of whom he spoke, for at that moment, with a certainty that amounted to positive conviction, I knew that he was innocent."

"You will say I acted wrongly, gentlemen; I grant it myself if you look at the mere law of the matter. The other eleven men came to a decision almost instantly after going out. The man, they said, was undoubtedly guilty. And I—well, I said nothing. I felt that the man's life was in my hands—that I was in that hour not bound by whatever any man or body of men might say or think, but that I had a question to decide in the presence of God. And I decided. I said to my fellow-jurymen, 'Gentlemen, I cannot and will not stand with you in a verdict of guilty against that man when I believe him to be innocent.' That was my decision, and all the arguments and objections they could bring forward during a long confinement could not change it. On the fourth day we were discharged and the prisoner was freed. Much was said against me; I was even accused of having been bought up by the young man's family, which was a very wealthy and influential one—and even to this day if I go back there I am pointed out as the man who sold his verdict. But it had been a matter of conscience with me, and I could not regret it. I have yet to tell you how it was the means of saving my life."

"Shortly after the trial, and more because of the ill name it had given me than anything else, I removed to New York, started in business there, and found myself, twenty years after, a prosperous merchant, yet somewhat broken in health. On the latter account I determined upon a sea voyage. I went to Fayal for several seasons, traveled a year or so on the continent, and finally having in a great measure recovered my health, I took passage by steamer for New York."

Somewhere about mid-ocean I experienced a terrible storm! I think the steamer was by no means as seaworthy as she should have been for a voyage at that time of the year, (it was in September,) at any rate a single night of rough weather strained her severely, and at breakfast the next morning it was whispered about that there was a leak forward, and that the water was gaining upon us in spite of everything that could be done; all the while, too, the violence of the storm increased rather than diminished. There certainly was very gross ignorance and incompetency manifested by the officers, for toward two o'clock P. M., as unexpectedly it would seem to them as to the passengers, the steamer, after laboring more heavily than ever for a few moments, seemed to settle visibly, the fires were extinguished by the water coming in and she became quite unmanageable. Two of the steamer's boats had been disabled during the storm. A rush was made for the remaining three by the cowardly crew; one was stove in launching and the other two swamped and their occupants left helpless in the water before they had put half a dozen rods between them and the ship. Indeed, no boat, however staunch, could have lived long in such a sea."

"As soon as it became definitely known that the vessel was sinking, I had gone below, reassured the affrighted lady-passengers as well as I could, and helped them to secure their life-preservers. Indeed, so assiduous had I become in the latter office that I had neglected to save one for myself, and when suddenly an appalling cry came from on deck and we rushed up just as the ship seemed in her last death-struggle, I was entirely destitute of any means of keeping afloat. I succeeded, however, in getting possession of a large plank; and while the passengers were jumping overboard all around me, I stood calmly by the rail waiting for the last moment. Beside me I now noticed for the first time a man of about my own age—from his dress seemingly one of the crew. He had a life-preserver strapped to his shoulders, and like myself appeared to be waiting for the final shock."

"You have no life-preserver?" he said, interrogatively; and even in that moment I remember thinking to myself how much his manner and speech seemed above his apparent station."

"No," I answered, "but this plank will, I think, serve me as well. There seems to have been an insufficient supply of life-preservers; I could get no more."

"Take mine," he said, and without a moment's hesitation began to unfasten it. I looked at him in astonishment and put out my hand to stop him, as I replied:

"No, I could not think of it. I shall get along very well."

"What he might have said further was out

off by a sudden thrill that ran through the vessel from stem to stern. We both well knew that another moment would be too late. With all my might I flung the plank from me and sprang after it into the water. Then I remember feeling a sharp blow on the head and seeing a thousand flashing lights, and then all was blank until—

"I awoke to consciousness to find myself fastened firmly to the plank by the strangest of lashings—a pair of human hands and arms. I felt, too, something about my shoulders which almost without thought I knew to be a life-preserver. The sea was dashing violently over me, and nearly smothered as I was all the time, it was some moments before I fully comprehended the situation."

"I saw now that the arms which upheld me were those of the man I had spoken to just before I left the vessel. He was supporting himself, and me, too, by means of the plank."

"What is the meaning of this?" I gasped, as soon as I found my voice.

"You struck your head against the plank when you came up, and you were floating off like a dead fish. I jumped over and brought you back to the plank."

"How long have I been this way?"

"About half an hour, though it seems half a day."

"Well, I can hold on for myself now," I said. "How shall I ever repay what you have done? I owe my life to you."

"But mine has belonged to you for twenty years," he said, with strange significance, and I noticed that his voice was feeble with continued exertion. Just then the waves swept over us more furiously than ever for a moment. As soon as there was a lull, I asked again:

"How came I with this life-preserver?"

"I put it on for you, and you must keep it."

"Why must I?"

"You don't remember me," he said; "you don't know that it was you who once saved me from a shameful death; but you will remember me when I tell you that it was I who was tried for murder twenty years ago in M—x court-house."

"He paused again, and feebly strove to collect himself. The frank, boyish face that I remembered was gone, but the eyes were the same that had met mine that day when the prisoner had uttered his strange words to the jury."

"Yes," he went on, "you were man enough to acquit me because you believed me innocent. And you were right. I repeat it here alone with my God, and in this hour of death—for I shall not be alive an hour hence—I was innocent. It was another who committed the crime, and I would have died rather than betray him."

"Still another long pause, and then again he went on with great effort:

"Ay, you saved my life for me, yet I sometimes wonder if it was well that you did so; I have seen no happy moment since then. I have wandered up and down the earth with the brand of Cain upon my life, and men have everywhere found it out and turned from me. I used to wonder why God let me be saved, but I see it plainly enough at this moment—he put it into your heart to save me, that I in turn might save you. You need not fear. The wind and the waves shall not harm you. He has something yet for you to do, and you will live to do it. He repeated the words weakly to himself, 'you will live to do it.' Then he reached out his hand to mine, and as I took it he murmured, 'I want you to pray for me a little while. I am getting weaker—wonder—and there is no good in my hanging on here any longer. It will be easier for you after I am gone. Let go my hand now, and I will wrenched away from me with sudden strength. 'God save you and bless you! I am going off to die by myself, and before I could make a motion to detain him he had let go his hold, and a passing wave caught him firmly and swept him away out of my sight and out of my life forever."

"Gentlemen, that is all of my story, and I assure you it is a true one. I was saved, of course, else I should not be here to tell the tale. I was picked up just at dark, when I had relinquished all hope. Here comes the porter to make up this section. I believe my berth is ready. Good night."

Heroes of History.

Mahomet, Prophet and Revolutionist.

BY LAUNCE POUNTNEY.

If we were required to name the man of all others whose character and actions have had the most influence on mankind in general, both as to number of people and extent of time, the choice must necessarily fall on Mahomet or Mohammed, the Arabian. We say "the man," for the far greater and wider scope of Christianity came not of man.

As a man, Mahomet has never been equalled, before or since. Great warriors like Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar and Napoleon, have influenced as large territories during their lives, but their influence has expired in the next generation. Great nations, such as Rome, the Tartars, the Anglo-Saxon race, have wielded greater sway, but their rise has been through a multitude of men, and their power, except the last, has become extinct. Mahomet alone, of all men in the world, by the influence of his single mind, gave a new religion to his own nation, and founded that great brotherhood of Islamism, which to-day rules over the greater portion of Africa, Asia, part of Europe, and a large section of the Isles of Malaysia. His followers gave to Christianity the rudest shock it ever received, and but for the great battle of Tours, fought by Charles Martel, the father of Charlemagne, they would probably have overrun all Europe at last. It becomes interesting to note the career and character of such a man.

Mahomet, or Mohammed, was born at Mecca, in Arabia, 570 years after our Savior. His father and mother were killed in an Arab foray soon after his birth, and the orphan was left in charge of his uncle, Abou Taleb.

When Mahomet was born Arabia was largely in a state of semi-barbarism, and full of the most degraded idolaters. Their principal object of adoration was nothing more than a great black stone, at Mecca, which was surrounded with three hundred and sixty-five hideous idols, one for every day in the year, and covered with a great temple called the Caaba. We shall have more to say about the Caaba before we have done.

The family of Mahomet belonged to the tribe of the Korish, who enjoyed the hereditary privilege of being guardians of the Caaba. His uncles, Abou Taleb, Abou Baker and Omar, were all wealthy townsmen, with flocks and herds outside, and enjoying considerable comfort. The orphan boy, however, shared the usual fate of poor relations. He was kicked about from pillar to post, and put

to work at an early age to tend camels. As he grew to manhood he became a camel-driver for his living, and soon attracted the notice of a rich widow named Cadijah, who used to hire out camels to the yearly caravans along the coast of the Red Sea. Being an active, brave and good-looking young fellow, the widow gradually raised him from post to post in her employment till he became her steward, and finally married her. Cadijah was then nearly twice the age of Mahomet, but it is recorded to his credit that he was faithful to his benefactress as long as she lived, and that a happier couple could not be found.

Before proceeding to describe the after life of Mahomet, it is well to say a few words about Arabia and her people in his time, and to correct some popular misapprehensions concerning it.

The common notion of Arabia, derived from school-books and maps, is that Arabia is a vast sandy desert, with a few oases sprinkled here and there, the whole inhabited by wandering tribes of Arabs, descendants of Ishmael. It is only within a few years past that this illusion has been dispelled by the explorations of Palgrave and some other travelers, and, comparing them with the accounts given two thousand years ago by Pliny and Herodotus, of the Roman and Greek periods. For many years, nay centuries, no European traveler has penetrated Arabia. The jealousy of Christians prevailing has deterred them from the attempt. The coasts being generally desert, and the wild Arabs roaming there freely, the mistake has been excusable which confounded these features with that of the whole country. Late researches reveal the north of Arabia, as large as the whole of France, to be a marvelously fertile and productive country, full of gardens and towns, with flourishing manufactures, and townspeople having considerable learning, and living in great luxury. Hills and dales, rivers and lakes, are as common as in other countries. Only one exception to the rule of the outside world exists. The rivers do not seek the sea. They fall into lakes, or are diverted over the country to irrigate it. In this lovely country the abundance of tropical fruits and spices is amazing. The old description of the Roman Pliny, who divided Arabia into Stony, Happy and Desert, is fully true. The mountains that border the Dead Sea to the north of Arabia constitute the first. The great country we have sketched makes the second, called by the Arabs Nedjed. The desert only occupies the southwest. A fourth country, the strip of land along the Red Sea, known as the Hedjaz, containing Mecca, Medinah, and Mocha, is generally sterile from want of sufficient water, but by no means a desert, although there are sandy strips here and there, for it contains a fair sprinkling of towns surrounded by date groves and coffee plantations.

The inhabitants of Arabia, moreover, are not all Ishmaelites. The roving Bedouins of the mountains and the people of the Hedjaz generally are, but the large masses of the inhabitants of Nedjed are of the pure race called Cushite, i. e., descendants of Cush, the son of Ham. This appears by their language, which is not Arabic, and by the traces of ancient architecture, strongly similar to the known remains of Cushite races in Egypt, India, Siam, Java, Sumatra, and South Central, and North America. In every other country this old Cushite race has perished away, leaving only its monuments and a few obscure tribes, driven out by the successive waves of conquerors, of the races of Shem and Japhet, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Noah in a striking degree. In Arabia alone does this Cushite race survive to the present day distinct from the Arabs.

In the time of Mahomet, these Cushite races ruled all Arabia. In spite of their ancient civilization, they had always been given to the most degraded and disgusting features of idolatry. They were the same race as the Canaanites, and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Wherever we find their architecture, we are sure to find their hideous idols, and other symbols of still more revolting character. Human sacrifices, mothers giving their children to the fire before idols, even cannibalism at religious festivals, distinguish these Cushite races, as much as their vast monuments. Such were the tribes who ruled Arabia, when Mahomet came. They had contaminated the Ishmaelites, who once knew the true God. Like the Jews, the Ishmaelites were always easily led into idolatry.

Mahomet lived among these people for forty years, as a camel-driver first, and a rich caravan proprietor later. During all this time he was known as a bold, shrewd trader, whose caravans were never robbed, but as nothing further. Then, of a sudden, at the age of forty, he retired to a cave in the desert mountains south of Mecca, and commenced to write the Koran.

It is one great disadvantage in finding out the truth about the early life of Mahomet, that it has only been told by his disciples long after. When he was obscure and unknown, no one cared to particularize his life. All we really know up to the time of his preaching Islamism and writing the Koran is, that he was a poor camel-driver, an orphan, married Cadijah, and lived to be forty. From henceforth, there is plenty of matter to write about. Friends and foes have written innumerable stories about him.

Whether we consider Mahomet as an impostor, or a madman, one question still remains to puzzle us. How could a camel-driver acquire the knowledge of other systems of religion and truths of philosophy displayed in the Koran? In that remarkable book we find many chapters that indicate a knowledge of the old Hebrew Scriptures, of part of the New Testament, and finally of the Jewish Talmud. The Koran, in all its aspects the most wonderful book ever written by a single man, contains the results of all these sources of information. The inference from these facts is, that Mahomet was not, in all probability, so sudden in his determination as has been supposed. To borrow from these books as he did, he must have read them. Brought up in the midst of fanatic idolaters as he was, trained up to abominate and despise Christian and Jew alike, it is not strange that he should have concealed the knowledge he gradually acquired of these mysterious books. His wandering life as a caravan leader kept him apart from his family for months together, and he did not dare communicate what he was thinking about to any one, not even his wife. She and all his tribe were old idolaters from birth. It must have been in his numerous journeys to Suez and Palestine that he acquired the books, or at least heard them read. That trade was as old as the time of Jacob. It was a "company of Ishmaelites" that bought Joseph of his brethren and sold him into Egypt. How or when Mahomet acquired his knowledge, and how long he brooded over it, will probably forever remain mysteries. He was certainly well acquainted with Old Testament history, with the life of our Savior, and with the Talmud. In our next article we shall show what he did with his knowledge at last.